

20th ANNIVERSARY EDITION

MAGE

THE ASCENSION



Introductory Quickstart Rules
and Adventure Hooks

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and Adventure Hooks**

Credits

Author and Quickstart Developer: Satyros Phil Brucato
Mage: The Ascension 20th Anniversary Edition Developer:
Satyros Phil Brucato
Creative Director: Richard Thomas
Editor: David A. Hill, Jr. and Rose Bailey
Art Direction and Design: Mike Chaney
Art: Brian Leblanc, Larry McDougal, Mike Gaydos, Jeff Laubenstein



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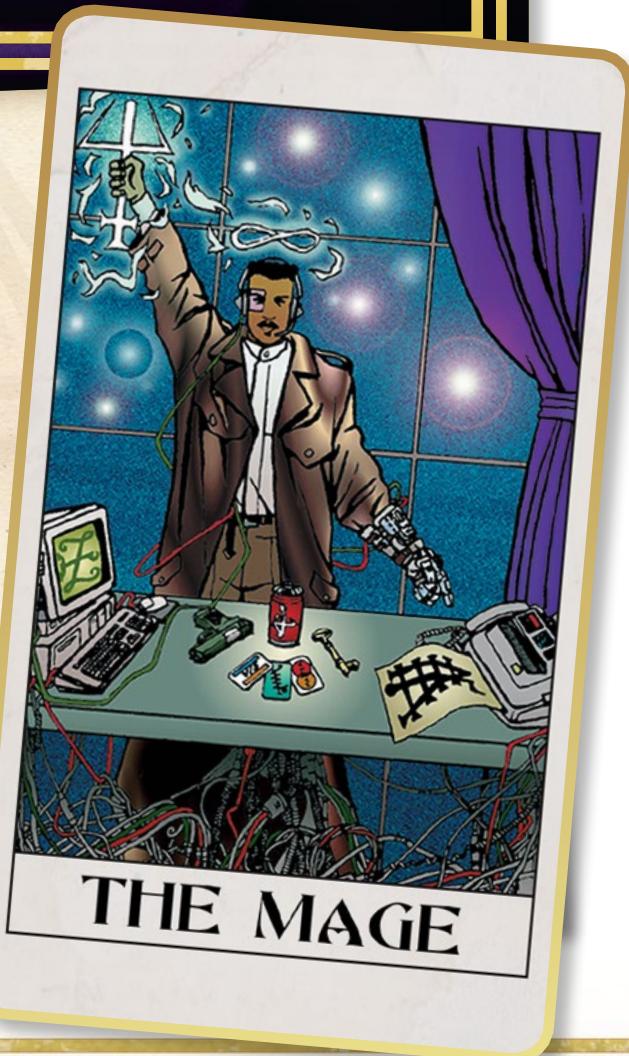
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Mage 20th Anniversary Quickstart

I tell you this: We are Divinity.
Reality is ours to bend. To subvert. To command.
We have that power – all of us.
Not everyone knows what to do with it, or uses it well. Most of us never realize just what it is we are or how much we can do.
Those of us who do... well, some of us are monsters. Manipulators. Parasites. Tyrants. Fanatics. And the rest of us never see that monster in our own mirror, only in the reflections of those folks who are not "us."
Here's the truth, though: We are ALL "us." We are ALL gifted, we can ALL change the world.
Most of us remain asleep.
A blessed few Awaken.
Fewer still use that power wisely.
And none without consequences.
And so, reality is up for grabs.
Where do you stand?
And will you Fall... or Ascend?



You Change Your World



If you had the power of a god, what would you do with it? And what would it do to you?

That question provides the heart of **Mage: The Ascension**, a Storytelling game about reality on the brink of change. In **Mage**, players take on the roles of people who have Awakened to their innate power to change the world. That rare gift forces them to confront their place in that world, and to face other people who might not be as kind or careful about the things they do.

Despite their power, every mage is a flawed human being, with all the fears, doubts and passions each one of us confronts in our everyday world. For a mage, however, belief – backed up by luck, skill and judgment – can transcend mortal limitations. By learning the Spheres, a mage can juggle elements of reality... and by gaining *Arete* – “excellence” – that person can become a greater force for change and expand his or her effects upon the world.

That power, of course, has a cost: the delusions of pride, the lure of power, and the effects of *Paradox*, the backlash that occurs when several versions of “reality” collide. No mage remains immune to those forces, and every mage must confront the limits of Awakening... often losing battles even if they win the war.

Mage, ultimately, is about people who believe in something so deeply that they change the world. Those changes can be dangerous, even fatal... but they’re better than remaining a pawn in someone else’s game.

Theme

Because the power of a mage’s Arts can alter reality through the power of Will, **Mage**’s primary theme is simple: *Reality is flexible, and at your command*. That “command” isn’t easy, or cheap, or perfect, but it’s *possible*... and in a world where we so often feel like we’re stuck dancing to someone else’s tune, that possibility *does* feel magical.



Mage: The Ascension presents 21st-century miracle-workers and the conflicts they endure. Divided, more often than not, into factions based on magic, faith, science and insanity, these “mages” wage a shadowy “Ascension War” over the different visions of reality they seek. Some follow the crafts of classical mysticism, embracing the ways of True Magick and its crosscurrents in Enlightened Science. Others strive to govern the world through hypertech disciplines, weeding out the “reality deviants” who threaten humanity’s survival. Handfuls of them pursue

In **Mage**, such “magic” is spelled with a “k” at the end. Why? Because, to quote master occultist Aleister Crowley, magick is “*the science and art of causing change to occur in conformity to the will*,” spelled as it is to “*distinguish the science of the Magi from all of its counterfeits*.” Other spellcasters use limited forms of “magic”; only a mage, however, can rework reality on a metaphysical level. That’s a risky pursuit, but the ability to change the world is often worth the price.

Mood

Mage’s world is grim, part of a larger World of Darkness. And yet, for a mage, there’s always *hope*. The power to change reality gives mages a great advantage in this dangerous world, and so the overriding mood in any **Mage** game involves optimism rather than despair.

Despair, though, is the flipside of hope, and so **Mage** games (also known as *chronicles*) ride along the edge of despair as well. The prices of magick can be high: madness, death, corruption and damnation. A **Mage** character, then, exists on the thin edge of hope and horror – an edge that the gutter-mages within this quickstart booklet understand all too well.

The Bridge Troll Cabal

Power exists in unlikely places. And so this quickstart introduction to the epic world of **Mage** features an unlikely pack of mages: the *Bridge Troll Cabal*, a “family” of gutter mystics whose life in the underside of Seattle, Washington, contrasts with the vibrant face of that city. Drawn from broken homes and tragic catastrophes, these mages protect their own weird little corner of the world. For the moment, they exist outside the vast intrigues of the greater Ascension War. Yet depending on their choices, that isolation might not last for long...

The details of the Bridge Troll Cabal can be found later in this booklet, after a summary of **Mage**’s setting and basic rules.

The Game

demented visions of Descent and madness, corrupting the world or tearing it apart at the seams. And many others – often referred to simply as *orphans* because they lack “parental guidance” – exist between the cracks, seeking Enlightenment and power wherever they can find it. Players take on the roles of these characters, and the game revolves around their struggles in that world.

Factions and Sects

The many factions and sects of the Awakened world weave a complicated dance through the setting of **Mage**. Even so, four factions stand out most clearly:



- **The Council of Nine Mystic Traditions**, an embattled fellowship of sorcerers, witches, unorthodox technicians, and other devotees of esoteric orders. Bitter enemies of the Technocratic Union, they appear to have been losing the battle for reality.

- **The Technocratic Union or Technocracy**, a ruthless hypertech consortium that strives for control over an increasingly chaotic world. Dedicated to wiping out Reality Deviants, they've spent over 500 years at war with the mystic Traditions.

- **The Nephandi**, a subversive network of nihilistic corrupters. Existing on the fringes of the other factions, this group commands a terrifying degree of influence within the modern World of Darkness.

- **The Marauders**, a loose confederation of metaphysical schizophrenics. Through rare and disorganized, these mages carry personal bubbles of "psychotic reality" wherever they go.

These four groups jockey for domination in a struggle for Earthly reality, and their struggles have echoed throughout human history, most especially within the last half-millennium.

For the most part, **Mage** characters come from within either the Traditions or the Technocratic ranks. Other mystic sects exist outside of these factions... *many more*, as it turns out, than the average mage realizes. These four factions, however, make up the bulk of that so-called Ascension War, and carry its conflicts into all aspects of the Awakened world... and, in many regards, into the mundane world as well.

The Nine Traditions

Seeking a return to the days of High Magick, or a new dawn of mystic potential, the mystics within these nine Traditions personify the word "mage."

- **The Akashayana:** Masters of mind, body and spirit, this "Brotherhood" pursues the Arts of personal discipline.

- **The Celestial Chorus:** Sacred singers who give a human Voice to the Divine Song, the Chorus magi nurture humanity and embody holy grace.

- **The Chakravanti, or Euthanatoi:** Disciples of mortality who purge corruption and bring merciful release from suffering, these "death mages" struggle with an ominous reputation and their sacred duty to the Cycle of Being.

- **The Cult of Ecstasy, or Sahajiya:** Visionary seers who transcend limitations through sacred experience, the members of this "Cult" expand perceptions, physics and time itself through their path of sacred excess.

- **The Dreamspeakers, or Kha'vadi:** Preservers and protectors of both the Spirit Ways and the Earthly cultures

that have been looted, abandoned and oppressed, these mystics mix timeless Arts with postmodern insight and righteous anger.

- **The Order of Hermes:** Rigorous masters of High Magick and the Elemental Arts, the many Houses of Hermes study powerful Arts and esoteric Sciences in their quest to perfect the human condition through mastery of Creation as a whole.
- **The Society (or “Sons”) of Ether:** Graceful saviors of scientific potential, the Etherites delve into strange theories and unconventional machines.
- **The Verbenae:** Devotees of rough Nature and mystic blood-Arts, these “witch-folk” command primal magicks and pagan refinements of technology.
- **The Virtual Adepts, or VAs:** Reality-hackers devoted to rebooting their world, the Adepts perfect the political ideals and esoteric uses of information technology.

The Technocratic Conventions

Despite a fearsome (and well-earned) reputation as ruthless oppressors, the agents of the Technocratic Union strive to unite humanity within a safely controlled technological ideal... under their Enlightened guidance and protection, of course.

- **Iteration X:** Perfectors of the human machine, these “machine people” combine esoteric cybernetics with industrial precision.
- **The New World Order:** Custodians of social order and global stability, NWO operatives provide safety and security for the Masses while eliminating Reality Deviants who threaten the human realm.
- **The Progenitors:** Innovators dedicated to the potential of organic life, these “mad doctors” challenge biological limitation in their quest to rectify nature’s “mistakes.”
- **The Syndicate:** Masters of the financial realm, social advancement and the power of wealth, these sharp operators understand the true meaning of “value” beyond mere monetary gain.
- **The Void Engineers:** Courageous and often eccentric operatives, the Engineers explore and protect Earthly and extradimensional space.

Unaligned Mages

Other mages and sects – often referred to, disparagingly, as “orphans” and “crafts” – exist outside of this Ascension War, either because they choose to avoid it, or because they don’t even realize it exists. *Mage: The Ascension 20th Anniversary Edition* explores the Crafts in greater detail, while this quickstart booklet features a group of “orphans” as a simple introduction

to the complex world of *Mage*. Even in between the shadows of this existential war, however, the battle for Reality influences the mages who refuse to take part in it.

Characters, and the Things They Can Do

Whether they belong to a faction or take on the world alone, each *Mage* character shares certain common elements:

- **Arete** and an *Awakened Avatar* (or *Eidolon*) that allows that person to rework reality through knowledge, imagination and Will;
- Certain *Traits* that reflect your character’s abilities;
- **Magick**, the talent for changing reality in ways that most people cannot manage. Even when a given character doesn’t consider such talents to be “magical,” the game-term for that ability is still called *magick*;
- **Focus**, the combination of belief, practice and instruments that allow your mage to employ magick.

Arete and the Avatar

Regardless of her faction or practices, every mage has *Arete* (“excellence”) that reflects her enlightenment, and an *Awakened Avatar* – an “inner self” that helps her channel her knowledge and imagination into magickal acts.

Certain groups, notably the Technocracy, don’t think of such things in mystical terms. They prefer to call *Arete* *Enlightenment*, and use the term *Eidolon* if and when they speak of the “avatar” at all. In game terms, however, it’s all the same thing. For simplicity’s sake, just think of them as *Arete* and the *Avatar* for now.

The higher your character’s *Arete* becomes, the more power she can use when casting spells. A high *Avatar* simply reflects the power of that mage’s inner self; although the *Avatar* has a range of other abilities in *Mage: The Ascension*, we just present the basics here. A low *Avatar*, then, reflects a faint “presence” within the mage’s mind, while a high *Avatar* represents a spirit that seems as real – to that mage – as anyone else she knows. Among the characters in this booklet, Chopper has a low *Avatar*, while Jinx has a very powerful one.

Traits

Each character in *Mage* has a collection of *Attributes* (innate capacities of body, mind, and social savvy), *Abilities* (Talents, Skills and Knowledges), and *Backgrounds* (benefits that your character enjoys – friends, allies, financial resources, and so forth). Those *Traits* represent the in-game capabilities of your mage. Measured in dots – usually along a scale between 1 and 5 – they reflect the character’s relative ability and tell you how many dice to roll when determining what she can do. For each dot in the appropriate *Trait*, you take one die to determine

your chance of succeeding at a given task. Added together, these dice become your *dice pool*; the bigger your pool, the greater your ability. For details, see **Rules of the Game**, below, and the character sheets for the various characters described later in this booklet.

When building your **Mage** character, you spend certain amounts of points on various Traits. The exact amounts depend upon the Trait in question. A zero-dot rating in a Trait reflects the total absence of that characteristic, while six dots or more in an Ability, Attribute or Background reflects an inhuman degree of expertise. Certain Traits – Arete, Willpower, Quintessence and Paradox – work on a different scale, ranging from 0 to 10. Aside from Willpower, non-mages don't have these Traits at all. Such large-scale Traits represent the differences between a mage and any other sort of character.

For the majority of your Traits, think of your character's abilities along this range:

X	No Capability
•	Poor/ Novice
..	Average/ Beginning Professional
...	Good/ Experienced Professional
....	Exceptional/ Highly Skilled Professional
.....	World-Class
..... •	Beyond Normal Human Range

Most folks range between 1 and 3 in their various Attributes, and between 0 and 3 in assorted Abilities. For the details involved in character creation, see **Mage: The Ascension 20th Anniversary Edition**, Chapter Six.

Mage

Each mage can perform magick. Whether a given mage considers it to be magick depends upon his beliefs, but in game

terms, magick is what makes a mage a mage. The specifics can be found below, in the rules about magick. For now, just remember that your mage employs nine *Spheres* when casting spells; his ability with a given Sphere reflects what he's able to do with it. You roll your mage's Arete Trait when using magick, and the better you roll, the more you accomplish.

Focus

Focus represents the things your mage does in order to employ her magick, and is the combination of belief, practice and instruments. Although different groups favor different approaches and disciplines, each mage has a focus that suits that individual's *paradigm* – the “model of reality” that reflects her beliefs about life, magick, the universe, and everything.

Essentially, a focus takes the mage's *beliefs*, puts them into a *practice*, and then uses certain *instruments* to make things happen. Those “instruments” don't have to be objects, either; a martial artist, for example, can use meditation, physical movements, mental concentration, and sacred teachings as the instruments of her practice.

Let's take that martial artist as an example: She believes in perfection and transcendence of the self through mastery of physical, mental and metaphysical forces; that's her paradigm. Her focus would be martial arts, and her instruments, as mentioned earlier, include various types of meditation, strikes and kicks, physical exercise, and so on.

To keep things simple, think of focus this way:

What does the mage believe? = paradigm

How does the mage turn belief into action? = practice

What does the mage use to do so? = instruments

All three combined = focus

Each of the characters in this booklet feature entries about the ways in which those characters focus their magick. For details, see those entries, as well as the **Focus and the Arts** section in **Mage: The Ascension 20th Anniversary Edition**, Chapter Ten.

Rules of the Game



The core of **Mage**'s Storyteller System is simple: Roll one 10-sided die for every dot you have in a Trait or combination of Traits; compare the numbers on those dice to a target number called a *difficulty*; and then count all the dice that equal or exceed that number. This basic system has a few permutations, but most situations in your **Mage** chronicle – from wrecking cop cars to cooking a great meal – can be resolved quickly, easily and fairly with the following rules.

Players and Storytellers

Within each Storyteller game, most players take on the roles of individual characters. One player, though – the *Storyteller* – essentially becomes the “director” of the story, playing the supporting roles, describing the setting, setting up the conflicts, and resolving the conflicts within your adventure.

Although the Storyteller has a certain degree of power (she's the one setting up the plot and keeping things in motion, after all), it's worth remembering that your Storyteller is a player in

her own right. Ideally, a **Mage** game is an exercise in collaborative creativity. Each player has at least one role, everyone contributes, and the Storyteller gets to enjoy the game as well. Although some other games feature an adversarial relationship between the “Game Master” and her players, **Mage** encourages everyone to work together even when their characters are tearing each other apart.

Dice Pools, and Rolling the Dice

As mentioned above, all characters have dice pools that reflect their ability to get things done. Generally, that dice pool comes from combining an Attribute with an Ability (say, Perception + Awareness), although certain situations call for a single Trait (usually Willpower, Arete, a Background, or some other Trait) instead of two of them combined.

Each dot (•) on your character sheet represents one 10-sided die, and the resulting collection of dice becomes your dice pool for that task. Sneaking across a room, for example, would combine Dexterity + Stealth; if your character’s got three dots in Dexterity and four dots in Stealth, then his dice pool would contain seven dice.

Difficulty

When rolling those dice, you want to equal or exceed the task’s difficulty number, simply called its *difficulty*. That difficulty shows how hard it is to accomplish a given task. Easy tasks have low difficulty numbers, while hard ones have higher numbers.

When you roll the dice, you want each die equal or exceed the difficulty number. For example, if that number’s 7, you want to score a 7, 8, 9 or 10 on the dice. Each number that equals or exceeds the difficulty is called a *success*; the more successes you roll, the better you do. If you don’t roll *any* dice that exceed the difficulty number, then you fail.

For most tasks, the “default” difficulty number is 6. If there’s not a specific difficulty number mentioned for a given task, then assume that difficulty is 6. The Storyteller always has the final word on the difficulty for a given situation.

Really simple tasks – those rated at difficulty 3 or 4 – don’t usually require a roll unless the consequences of failure are particularly severe (like getting caught using your boss’s computer) or the character in question has very little chance of succeeding at even the simplest task (that is, he has a dice pool lower than four). In most cases otherwise, simply consider the task an *automatic success* (again, see below.)

A roll of 10 is always a success unless there was no way you could have performed that task to begin with. Not even a 10 will help you shout the moon out of the sky!

For examples for potential tasks and their associated difficulties, see the chart nearby. For further details, see **Mage: The Ascension 20th Anniversary Edition**, Chapters Eight and Nine.

Difficulty	Examples
3	Trivial (hopping a creek)
4	Easy (cooking a meal)
5	Straightforward (changing the oil in your car)
6	Standard (punching someone in the face)
7	Challenging (comprehending a book by Crowley)
8	Difficult (Playing through “2112” on your guitar)
9	Extreme (sealing a multimillion-dollar business deal with reluctant partners involved)

Degrees of Success

One success	Marginal (finding a helpful TV Tropes entry)
Two Successes	Moderate (getting someone’s cellphone number)
Three Successes	Complete (delighting your new playmate with a fresh-cooked breakfast)
Four Successes	Exceptional (selling five books to someone who’d come looking for one)
Five or More Successes	Phenomenal (writing the 500,000-word anniversary edition of a series you helped create 20 years ago)

Botching and the “Rule of One”

There’s also a kind of failure you can’t recover from: the *botch*, a catastrophic failure which leaves the character in a worse situation than he was in before the roll.

Story-wise, a botch reflects spectacular bad luck. Game-wise, every 1 you roll takes away one success on your dice. Call this “the rule of one.” If your 1s cancel out all your successes, then you fail. If you roll three successes, then roll three 1s, you’re left right where you were before.

Assuming that you rolled even *one* success, even after the 1s cancel out all your successes, then your character simply fails.

But if you don’t roll *any* successes, and you roll a 1, then you botch.

That’s where things get ugly. A high difficulty makes it harder for you to score a success, and so the odds of a spectacular catastrophe go up as you attempt more challenging feats. If Sabra tries to sneak through the yard in broad daylight (difficulty 9), his chances of getting caught right out in the open (a botch) go way up because he’s not likely to roll any 9s or 10s.

If you roll *several* 1s, and no successes, then you botch in a big way. A single botch might prove embarrassing, while a three-1s botch could prove fatal. The Storyteller gets the final say, but impressive botches should have impressively terrible results.



Spending Willpower

Determination makes a huge difference, especially when you're the heroic type. In game terms, you can spend a point of your character's Willpower trait to get one automatic success even under stressful conditions. By putting serious focus behind the task at hand, your character pushes past his usual limits. Though you can spend only one point of Willpower per turn – but several during an extended action – you can avoid botching and give your character a better chance at success.

Modified Difficulties and Dice Pools

Under certain circumstances – say, in high winds or driving rain – a task might be more challenging than usual. In such cases, your Storyteller may raise the difficulty one to three steps above its usual level. In the opposite case – say, really favorable circumstances – the difficulty might fall a step or two.

On a related note, a character might find a given task harder than usual because of internal circumstances – injuries, fears, disorientation, etc. In that case, the Storyteller might tell her to take some dice out of the pool she would normally use. On the other hand, favorable internal circumstances might boost her usual chances, adding to her dice pool.

For clarity and simplicity, **Mage** usually limits modifiers to +3 or -3, and generally takes up to three potential modifiers into account. Really extreme situations might raise the difficulty

by +5 or even more, but magick rolls (see below) are limited to +/-3 modifiers.

Combat Rules

When life gets rough, things can get ugly. Although mages aren't as hands-on as their more violent rivals in the World of Darkness, they often know how to kick ass when the situation demands it. That said, mages are normal human beings, despite an extraordinary capacity for magick. Injuries *hurt*, and it takes radical applications of magick to heal gunshots or broken bones.

Initiative

If things get violent, the various players roll initiative for their characters, to see which ones go before the others. Each player rolls one die, and then adds the result to his or her Dexterity + Wits dice pool. Jinx, for example, has Dexterity 3 and Wits 2; her dice pool, then, is 5. For initiative, you would roll one die and add it to 5. A roll of 5, added to that 5, would give Jinx an initiative of 10 for that particular combat scene. Each combat scene demands a new initiative roll.

The characters with the highest initiatives go first, with those who rolled lower following behind them. In the case of tie-rolls, the character with the highest Dexterity goes first; if the tied characters have the same Dexterity, than the one with the higher Wits goes first.

Attacks

When assaulting someone, the player rolls a certain dice pool against difficulty 6:

- **Guns:** Dexterity + Firearms.
- **Thrown Weapons:** Dexterity + Athletics.
- **Hand-Held Weapons:** Dexterity + Melee.
- **Bare-Hand Attacks:** Dexterity + Brawl or Martial Arts.
- **Magickal Attacks:** Arete. If the attack involves a strike or weapon, then roll the appropriate Trait, as above.

Each success after the first one adds one additional die to the damage dice pool; if Jinx scores four successes when kicking a dude in the face, then her player adds three more dice to the amount of damage she inflicts with that kick.

Defense

When attacked, a character usually gets a chance to defend himself unless he's tied up, unconscious, or otherwise unable to react to the assault.

As with an attack, each type of potential defense involves different dice pool. Each success removes one of the attacker's successes. If the defense removes all of those successes, then the attack misses completely.

- **Dodge:** Dexterity + Athletics, difficulty 6.
- **Block:** Dexterity + Brawl or Martial Arts, difficulty 8.
- **Parry:** Dexterity + Melee or Martial Arts, difficulty 7.

Under the full Mage rules, blocks and parries are a bit more complex. For this quickstart booklet, however, simply assume the difficulties given above.

Countermagick

When one mage attacks another one, the defender can try to "counter" his magick with an intuitive "dodge." This dodge demands a full action, and an Arete roll, difficulty 8.

Successful countermagick reduces the attacker's effectiveness. Each success on the countermagick roll reduces that attacking mage's Arete roll by one success. If all the attacker's successes are wiped out, then the spell is "countered," and it fails.

Damage and Injury

Mage features three types of damage:

- **Bashing damage,** which reflects blunt trauma and minor injuries (scratches, bruises, etc.).



- **Lethal damage,** which comes from deadly attacks (guns, claws, blades, etc.).



- **Aggravated damage,** which inflicts massive tissue and organ damage (fire, radiation, electricity) or metaphysical harm (vampire claws, spiritual attacks, etc.).



Soaking Damage

Normal people and animals can try to "soak" bashing damage through physical toughness. In game terms, a player rolls his character's Stamina Trait against difficulty 6. Each success reduces the amount of damage by one health level. (See *Health Levels*, below.)

Normal organic beings cannot soak lethal or aggravated injuries. Soaking that sort of damage demands either armor or a Life 3 spell that toughens the character's body and allows him to endure more injury than usual. (See the *Common Magickal Effects chart* in the *Magick Rules* section, below.)

Health Levels

When your character suffers damage, mark it off on the Health track of the character sheet. Use a pencil, not a pen. As he recovers from injury, erase those marks as the Health Trait goes back up. You mark bashing damage with a single slash (/), lethal damage with an X, and aggravated damage with an asterisk (*).

New damage pushes existing damage to the right on the Health track, as shown in the nearby example. If Khan has two levels of bashing damage on his Health track, and then suffers a level of lethal damage, then his player would add an asterisk to the left side of the Health track and add a slash to the right side, to reflect the addition of that "pushed" damage.

Bashing damage heals much faster than lethal or aggravated injury. For the normal healing rates, see the *Health Level chart* nearby. Life-Sphere magick, however, can heal damage far more quickly - for details, again, see *Common Magickal Effects* under the *Magick Rules* section.

Weapons, Armor and Combat Maneuvers

In combat, weapons and certain maneuvers add damage and sometimes modify the attack roll as well. Armor, meanwhile, adds to the Stamina roll when soaking damage, and also allows a character to soak damage that she normally could not soak otherwise. The game effects of weapons, armor, and combat maneuvers can be found on the appropriate charts.



The Health Chart

Health Levels	Dice Pool Penalty	Movement Penalty
Bruised	0	Minor pain and swelling; he's banged up but otherwise fine.
Hurt	-1	Cuts, bruises, aches, perhaps bleeding but no major impairment.
Injured	-1	Minor and painful injuries limit the character to half his normal movement.
Wounded	-2	Notable injuries handicap him; the character can't run, but may still walk.
Mauled	-2	Significant internal and external damage; character can hobble around (three yards/ turn) but not move normally.
Crippled	-5	Catastrophic injuries; character can only crawl (one yard/ turn).
Incapacitated	N/A	Character's unconscious from pain and trauma; no movement possible.
Dead	N/A	Another soul greets the Great Mystery.

Healing Damage

Health Level	Recovery Time
BASHING DAMAGE	
Bruised to Wounded	One hour
Mauled	Three hours
Crippled	Six hours
Incapacitated	12 hours
LETHAL AND AGGRAVATED DAMAGE	
Bruised	One day
Hurt	Three days
Injured	One week
Wounded	One month
Mauled	Two months
Crippled	Three months
Incapacitated	Five months

Armor and Shields

Armor Type	Rating	Dexterity Penalty
Tough Hide	1-3	0
Cybernetic Armor	1-4	0
Reinforced Clothing	1-2	0
Enhanced Clothing	1-5	0
Biker Jacket	1	-1
Leather Duster	2	-2
Kevlar Vest	3	-1
Flak Vest	4	-2
Riot Suit	5	-2
Military Armor	5	-2
SHIELDS		
Trashcan Lid	3/+1	0
Wooden Shield	2/+2	-1
Metal Shield	4/+2	-2
Riot Shield	5/+2	-1

General Hand-to-Hand Maneuvers

Maneuver	Traits	Difficulty	Damage
Bite	Dexterity + Brawl	5	Strength +1 to +3 /B or L
Claw	Dexterity + Brawl	6	Strength +1 to +3 /L
Disarm	Dexterity + Melee	+1 / 8	Special #1
Flank/ Rear Attack	Dexterity + Ability	-1 /-2	As Attack
Grapple	Strength + Brawl	6	Strength or None
Kick	Dexterity + Brawl	7	Strength +1 /B
Punch	Dexterity + Brawl	6	Strength /B
Sweep	Dexterity + Brawl	8	Special #2
Tackle	Dexterity + Brawl	7	Strength + #3 /B

Notes

#1 = Attacker rolls Dexterity + Melee at +1 difficulty; if successes exceed opponent's Strength score, he drops weapon. If not, attacker inflicts usual damage. On botched roll, attacker loses own weapon. Bare-handed disarm is Dexterity + Brawl, difficulty 8, minus one die from usual attack pool.

#2 = Knockdown: if blow succeeds, antagonist winds up on ground.

#3 = Requires at least two yards to achieve effective momentum. Each combatant needs successful Dexterity + Athletics roll (difficulty 6 for the attacker, difficulty 6 + the attacker's successes for the target) or wind up on ground. May damage attacker.

Dirty-Fighting Maneuvers (min. three dots in Brawl)

Maneuver	Traits	Difficulty	Damage
Blinding	Dexterity + Subterfuge	9	Special #1
Body Slam	Dexterity + Brawl	6	Strength + 2/B or L
Curbstomp	Strength + Brawl 6 Strength +2 /L		
Haymaker	Dexterity + Brawl	7	Strength +2/ B + Knockdown
Low Blow	Dexterity + Brawl	7	Strength + Stun /B or L
Pistol Whip	Dexterity + Melee	7	Strength +2 /L

Notes

#1 = Enemy blinded for one turn per success, loses two dice from his dice pools until he recovers. Perhaps lasting injury, depending upon attack.

Ranged Combat Maneuvers

Maneuver	Traits	Difficulty	Damage
Aiming	Dexterity + Firearms	N/A	+2 dice to hit, per turn
Full-Auto	Dexterity + Firearms	+2	+10 dice
Point-Blank	Dexterity + Firearms	4	Weapon
3-Round Burst	Dexterity + Firearms	+1	+3 dice to hit
Thrown Weapon	Dexterity + Athletics	6	Weapon



Melee Weapons

Weapon	Difficulty	Damage/Type	Conceal	Notes
AXES				
Hatchet	6	Strength +1/L	J	
Tomahawk	6	Strength +2/L	J	
Axe	7	Strength +3/L	N	
Great Axe	7	Strength +6/L	N	#1
Polearm	7	Strength +3/L	N #2	
BLADES				
Stiletto	4	Strength +1/L	P	#3
Knife	4	Strength +1/L	P	
Short Sword	5	Strength +2/L	J	
Sword	6	Strength +2/L	T	
Katana	6	Strength +3/L	T	#4
Great Sword	5	Strength +6/L	N	#1
Sai	5	Strength +1/L	J	#5, #6
CLUBBING WEAPONS				
Bo Stick				
Staff	6	Strength +1/B	N	
Mace	6	Strength +2/L	N	

Melee Weapons (Continued)

Nunchaku	7	Strength +2/B	T	#5, #7
Crowbar	6	Strength +1/L	J	
Baseball Bat	5	Strength+2/B	T	
Spiked Club	6	Strength +2/L	T	
Huge Spiked Club	7	Strength +4/L	N	#1
FIST-EXTENSION WEAPONS				
Sap	4	Strength +1/B	P	
Brass Knuckles	6	Strength/L	P	
Spiked Gauntlet	6	Strength +1/L	J	
Hand Claws (small)		Strength +1/L		
Hand Claws (large)		Strength +2/L		
IMPROVISED WEAPONS				
Broken Bottle	6	Strength +1/L	P	#8
Chair	7	Strength +2/B	N	
Chainsaw	8	Strength +7/L	N	#9
Table	8	Strength +3/B	N	#1
Whips and Chains				#7, #10
Chain	5	Strength/B	J	
Flogger	6	Strength +1/B		
Barbed Cat	6	Strength/L	J	
Whip	6	Strength/L	J	
Bullwhip	7	Strength +1/L	J	

Notes

Difficulty: The normal difficulty at which the weapons is used.

Damage: The number of damage dice rolled when employing this weapon.

Type: B = Bashing L = Lethal A = Aggravated

Conceal: P = Pocket J = Jacket T= Trenchcoat N= N/A

* 1 = Two-handed weapon; very heavy – requires min. Strength 3 to employ.

* 2 = Requires two hands to employ properly; +2 difficulty if used one-handed.

* 3 = Penetrates up to three points of armor.

* 4 = May be used two-handed for an additional +1 damage die.

* 5 = +1 to dice pool when used to block.

* 6 = +2 to dice pool for disarm attempts.

* 7 = +1 difficulty to opponent's block attempts.

* 8 = Breaks after three uses.

* 9 = On a botch, user inflicts damage upon self.

Ranged Weapons

Type	Damage	Range	Rate	Clip	Conceal	Notes
Revolver, Lt.	4	12	3	6	P	
SW M640 (.38 Special)						
Revolver, Hvy.	6	35	2	6	J	
Colt Anaconda (.44 Magnum)						
Semi-Automatic Pistol, Lt.	4	20	4	17+1	P	
Glock 17 (9mm)						
Semi-Automatic Pistol, Hvy.	5	30	3	7+1	J	
IMI Desert Eagle (.50 AE)						
Rifle	8	200	1	5+1	N	
Remington M-700 (30.06)						
SMG, Small	4	25	3	30+1	J	#1
Ingram Mac-10 (9mm)						
SMG, Large	4	50	3	30+1	T	
HK MP-5 (9mm)						
Assault Rifle	7	150	3	42+1	N	#1
AK-47 (7.62x39mm)						
Shotgun, Sawed-Off	8	10	2	2	J	
Winchester Model 24 double-barrel (12 Gauge)						
Shotgun	8	20	1	5+1	T	
Ithaca M-37 (12 Gauge)						
Taser	5	5	1	1	P	#2
Tear Gas	3	3	1	5	P	#2
Pacification Spray	5	3	1	5	P	#2

Notes

Damage: All damage from firearms is lethal.

Range: Within listed range (in yards), difficulty is 6; at twice listed Range, difficulty is 8; within two yards, difficulty is 4.

Rate: Maximum number of bullets or three-rounds bursts the gun can fire in a single turn.

Clip: Maximum number of bullets the gun can hold. Some guns, listed as "+1", can hold a full clip with a round ready in the chamber.

Conceal: See *Melee Weapons* chart.

#1 = Gun may fire full-auto, three-round bursts, and strafing sprays.

#2 = Bashing damage, not lethal; adds no extra damage from successes scored. Tear gas and Technocratic pacification spray also reduce target's dice pools by two dice for one turn per success.

Magick Rules

In *Mage*, magick is freeform, an extension of the mage rather than a fixed collection of spells. By combining the Spheres, a focus, and a lot of imagination, skilled mages can alter reality in an almost limitless number of ways. Obviously, the real power comes at greater levels of expertise. Still, a clever mage can tilt circumstances in her favor with a little bit of basic magick and a lot of imagination.

The Consensus: Coincidental and Vulgar Magick

Unlike the wizards of legend, modern mages cannot simply throw thunderbolts or turn people into frogs. In today's world, a mage needs to think about what may or may not seem possible to the average person. Strange things that appear to fit into everyday reality may be passed off as "coincidences." Obvious magickal spells, on the other hand, are "vulgar" because they violate the *Consensus* of what is and is not considered "possible." So certain types of magick are considered *coincidental*, while others are condemned for being *vulgar*.

In game and story terms, coincidental magick is easier to cast, and less hazardous, than vulgar magick is. Spells whose effects no one can see – altered perceptions, quirks of luck, enhanced effects from a perfectly "normal" activity – are easy to pass off as coincidences, while spells that obviously involve

supernatural forces – changing form, conjuring fire, flying through the air on a broom – tend to be vulgar in the modern world. As a simple rule, assume that any act of magick that a normal citizen of today's world could see and accept as an everyday occurrence is coincidental, while some spell that looks supernatural or otherwise "impossible" is vulgar.

Witnesses or No Witnesses?

When a mage casts a spell, one factor makes a huge difference in that spell's ultimate results: *Did someone see him do it?* If a more or less "normal" person – that is, someone who's not a mage or some other denizen of the supernatural world – witnessed that event, then the potential for failure and Paradox is higher than it would be if that spell had been cast in secret or in front of other "believers."

In terms of magick, that "witness" is Joe or Jane Average – not a cultist or a vampire or some other person who's been initiated into occult mysteries. And because the average citizen of today's world trusts in the miracles of technology, a mage who uses technological tools and beliefs – that is, a technological *focus* – can get away with more outrageous things than a mage who employs the tools of classical magic. To the average person, a dude who shoots fire out of his fingertips while chanting the names of 16 demons is violating the laws of reality; strap a flamethrower onto that dude's back, however, and that bolt of fire is totally acceptable – *dangerous*, sure, but not at all "impossible"!



Thanks to such perceptions, a mage's focus can make a huge difference when he's using magick. If, for example, Synder chants arcane words, sprinkles bone-dust in the air, and then points her finger at a dude's face, giving him a bloody nose from a distance, then she's committing vulgar magick. If she mutters something under her breath and then belts him in the teeth, however, the resulting carnage can be explained away as "a really good punch," and thus a coincidence. In *Mage* the *way* you do something is often more important than the thing you do.

(For more details about focus, see the section of that name, above, and the various *Focus* entries on each character's description.)

Casting Magick

Okay, so how, in game terms, does your character cast a spell?

- **Step One – Effect:** Based on your character's abilities and needs, you decide what you want to do and how you want to do it. This is called the *Effect*: the thing you want to accomplish with your magick.
- **Step Two – Ability:** Based on your mage's *focus* and *Spheres*, figure out if you can create the Effect you want to create... and if so, how your character will make it happen in story terms.
- **Step Three – Roll:** Roll one die for every dot in your Arete Trait. The difficulty of that roll depends upon the Effect you're trying to use; whether it's *vulgar* or *coincidental*; and whether or not someone's watching you:
 - ***Coincidental*:** Difficulty = highest Sphere + 3
 - ***Vulgar Without Witnesses*:** Difficulty = highest Sphere + 4
 - ***Vulgar With Witnesses*:** Difficulty = highest Sphere + 5

If you're trying to hit a target with an attack (sword, gun, fireball, etc.), then roll the appropriate attack roll; see *Combat Rules*, above, for details.

- **Step Four – Results:** The number of successes that you roll determines whether or not you succeed. If you fall short of your goal, you may roll again to get more successes. If you fail, the Effect fizzles out. And if you botch, bad things happen.

Paradox

When a mage pushes too hard in his efforts to change reality, reality pushes back; the stronger the push from that mage, the harder the pushback against his efforts. In a phenomenon that mages often call the *Paradox Effect*, that pushback can knock

Paradox Points Generated

ON A SUCCESS	
Coincidental	None
Vulgar	One point
ON A BOTCH	
Coincidental	One per dot in highest Sphere
Vulgar Without Witnesses	One + one per dot in highest Sphere
Vulgar With Witnesses	Two + two per dot highest Sphere

Paradox Backlash Roll

Successes	Effects of Discharge
Botch	All Paradox points discharge harmlessly.
No successes	No effects, but no Paradox points discharge.
1-5	One point of Paradox discharged per success. Mage also suffers one level of bashing damage per success, and acquires a trivial Paradox Flaw.
6-10	One point of Paradox discharged per success. Mage also suffers a "burn" of one level of bashing damage per success, and acquires a minor Paradox Flaw.
11-15	Usual Paradox point discharge, as well as (successes - 10) levels of lethal damage and one of the following effects: a significant Paradox Flaw, a Paradox Spirit visitation, or a mild Quiet.
16-20	Usual Paradox point discharge, as well as (successes - 10) levels of lethal damage and two of the following effects: a severe Paradox Flaw, a Paradox spirit visitation, a moderate Quiet, one point of permanent Paradox, or banishment to a Paradox Realm.
21+	Usual Paradox discharge; plus (successes - 20) levels of aggravated damage; two severe, or one drastic, Paradox Flaws; one point of permanent Paradox; and perhaps a Paradox spirit visitation, a severe Quiet, or banishment to a Paradox Realm.

the mage sprawling, tear him apart on a metaphysical level, drive him insane, or even kick him out of this world and into an otherworldly Paradox Realm... aka "reality jail."

The full rules for Paradox and its many calamities can be found in *Mage 20th Anniversary Edition*. The basics, though, are easy:

- If your mage casts a coincidental Effect, then he gets no Paradox if he's successful, and one point of Paradox for each dot in the highest Sphere if he botches. (See *Botching and the Rule of One*, above, and *The Spheres*, below.)

- If he casts a vulgar Effect, then he gets one point of Paradox if he's successful. If he botches without any witnesses, then he gets one point + one more point for each dot in the highest Sphere. If he botches in front of witnesses, then he gets two points of Paradox, plus two points for each dot in the highest Sphere. Those points of Paradox go onto the Paradox/ Quintessence wheel, located at the bottom of the **Mage** character sheet.
- If he gets five points of Paradox or more, than the Storyteller rolls one die for each point of Paradox in that character's current Paradox pool, against difficulty 6. The **Paradox Backlash Roll chart** tells you what happens after that.

To keep things simple, a new Storyteller could just use physical damage as a Paradox backlash. For details about Paradox Flaws, Spirits and Realms, plus the mystic insanity called *Quiet*, see **Mage: The Ascension 20th Anniversary Edition**, Chapter Ten.

The Spheres

To make a terrible pun of it, **Mage**'s Spheres reflect a “well-rounded knowledge” of nine different yet interrelated elements of reality. In story terms, these nine constructs represent a sort of “unified field theory” of Earthly metaphysics. In game terms, they measure what **Mage** characters do and cannot do, based upon their understanding of theoretical knowledge and practical results.

The nine Spheres, and the fields they control, are as follows:

- Correspondence** – the element of connection between apparently different things.
- Entropy** – the principle of chance, fate and mortality.
- Forces** – the understanding of elemental energies.
- Life** – keys to the mysteries of life and death.
- Matter** – the principles behind supposedly “inanimate” objects.
- Mind** – exploration of the potentials of consciousness.
- Prime** – an understanding of the Primal Energy within all things.
- Spirit** – comprehension of Otherworldly forces and inhabitants.
- Time** – the strange workings of chronological forces and perceptions.

Each Sphere features five different levels of progress and result. That progression gets represented by the number of dots in your character's Sphere Trait. Each successive level allows your mage to understand a bit more about the principles of that

Sphere. As a result, she can do more things with it, adding a new level of abilities onto the previous levels of accomplishment:

- **Rank 1: Perception** – the ability to perceive and observe the forces in question. With such basic (yet useful) understanding, a character can sense things that few mortals ever recognize.
- **Rank 2: Manipulation** – the ability to do small things with those forces. At this point, the mage begins to exert minor control over the phenomena she sees, and may use it to work small changes upon herself.
- **Rank 3: Control** – the ability to alter reality in noticeable ways, though these effects are usually restricted to the mage herself. In most cases, the Sphere begins inflicting damage at this level, and allowing the character to work small alterations on other characters.
- **Rank 4: Command** – the ability to perform major acts of alteration through the principles of the Sphere. Generally, this level allows the mage to make significant changes to the Patterns of other characters.
- **Rank 5: Mastery** – the ability to command vast forces in connection with that element of reality. By now, the mage knows almost everything there is to know about the principles of that Sphere, and can perform godlike deeds with them.

Effects

In **Mage**, characters can use the Spheres to craft all kinds of amazing Effects – spells, rituals, acts of mad science, and so forth. The characters use their own names for such miracles, but in the language of the game, every act of magick is simply called an “Effect.”. The differences between the magick cast by a Catholic priest, a steampunk scientist, a Pagan witch and a cybernetic assassin come through the focus that each mage employs. The game systems all work the same way for each character – it’s the roleplaying and the Storytelling that mark the differences between them.

Certain Effects demand a certain degree of skill with the proper Spheres. If you don’t have Life 3, for example, you can’t heal an injured friend. Assuming that your mage has the right Spheres, however, she can perform a range of Effects, and combine Spheres to expand the possibilities.

For simplicity, this quickstart booklet features an array of common magickal Effects, along with the Spheres used to create them. When your character wants to cast an Effect, check the **Common Magickal Effects chart** to see whether or not she can pull it off. The larger game has many more possibilities, and the specifics can be found in **Mage: The Ascension 20th Anniversary Edition**, Chapter Ten.

Damage and Duration

When Effects cause or heal damage, the amount of that damage depends upon the **Damage or Duration chart**, below. Certain Spheres inflict bashing damage, others lethal, and still others

aggravated. See the chart for details. In most cases, characters can't soak damage that's inflicted directly by Life, Mind, or high-level Entropy magick. Damage that's inflicted by magickally created attacks, however (like fire, bullets, flying rocks, and so forth) can be soaked by anyone who can soak the appropriate kind of attack. A falling ceiling tile, for instance, would inflict bashing damage, which anyone can try to soak. A Forces-based fire attack, however, would involve fire, which most characters cannot soak.

For Effects that last a certain amount of time – like a dimensional gateway or a shift into fox-form – the duration is also based upon the number of successes you roll. You can find the duration lengths on the *Damage or Duration chart* as well. That chart measures only damage or duration, not both! A given Effect either inflicts damage instantly, or else alters reality for a particular period of time. (*Mage: The Ascension 20th Anniversary Edition* covers more complex combinations of damage and duration, but those rules go beyond the scope of this booklet.)

Damage or Duration

Successes	Damage	Duration
One	None	One turn
Two	Two levels	One scene
Three	Six levels	One day
Four	Eight levels	One story
Five	Ten levels	Six months
Six+	Number of Successes x 2	Storyteller's option

Magickal Damage

- **Bashing Damage:** Mind-Sphere Effects.
- **Lethal Damage:** Most other Sphere Effects.
- **Aggravated Damage:** Any Sphere when “charged” with Prime 2 and a point of Quintessence.
 - Fire or electrical Forces Effects.
 - Vulgar Entropy-, Life- or Prime-based Effects that directly disrupt the target’s Pattern.

Correspondence and Time inflict no damage unless they’re combined with other Spheres.

The Forces Sphere adds one automatic success to Damage.

Entropy inflicts damage only through indirect attacks until Rank Four; after that, damage is aggravated.

Damage also reflects the amount of health levels healed by the Life Sphere, or the points of Quintessence channeled by the Prime Sphere.

To preserve game balance, the Storyteller may choose to cap damage at 20 health levels (10 successes, or nine successes for Forces-Sphere attacks).

Correspondence, Spirit and Time-Sphere Effects

The mysterious Spheres of Correspondence, Spirit and Time work differently than other Spheres. Each one has certain game-based effects that – like damage and duration – are based upon the number of successes you roll:

- Correspondence allows a mage to reach or perceive across distances. The more successes you roll, the further you can extend yourself.
- Spirit allows you to see through, or cross over, the *Gauntlet* between the physical world and the spirit-realm called the *Umbra*. (For details, see *Mage: The Ascension 20th Anniversary Edition*, Chapters Four and Nine.)
- Time allows the mage to dilate time, speed things up, slow things down, or perceive things that exist at different points of the past or future.

In all three cases, the appropriate charts list the successes you need to roll in order to achieve certain levels of effect with these Spheres.

Correspondence Sphere Ranges

Successes	Range	Connection
One	Line of sight	Body sample
Two	Very familiar	Close possession or companion
Three	Familiar	Possession or casual friend
Four	Visited Once	Casual acquaintance, or object used once
Five	Described location	Briefly touched or met object or person
Six+	Anywhere on Earth	No connection

Spirit Sphere Gauntlet Ratings

Area	Difficulty	Successes Needed
Node	3	One
Deep Wilderness	5	Two
Rural Countryside	6	Three
Most Urban Areas	7	Four
Downtown	8	Five
Technocracy Lab	9	Five

Notes

An area’s Gauntlet Difficulty may vary with time and circumstances. For example, a dark alley on Halloween night might have a Gauntlet of 6, while a rigidly cultivated garden at noon could have a Gauntlet of 8.

Time Sphere Timelines

Successes Effect Time-span

One	Within a year
Two	Five years
Three	20 years
Four	50 years
Five	100 years
Six +	500 years
10+	1000 years or more

Notes

Time-span limits apply only to looking or reaching through time, not to the duration of a given Effect.

Feats of Time Magick

Successes Feat

Three	Step out of time/ minor aging.
Four	Take one other character out of time/ noticeable aging.
Five	Take several characters, or a roughly 10' x 10' area, out of time/ severe aging.
Eight	Take larger area (25' x 25') out of time/ age to decrepitude.
10-20	Take an even larger area out of time/ age to brink of destruction.
20+	Freeze or isolate very large and dynamic area or event/ age out of existence.

Notes

Any Time-Sphere Effect that attempts to wind time backwards, reversing time, add +3 to its difficulty and requires no less than five successes. Such acts are always vulgar magick.

Common Magickal Effects

Many of the Effects listed below feature two different Sphere levels. The first one lets a mage work on herself, while the second, in parentheses, allows her to work on others. Changing your own shape, for example, requires Life 4, while changing someone else's shape demands Life 5. Other workings begin small, but then their effects escalate with higher Sphere-levels. These workings have been marked with a "+". Entries marked (appropriate Sphere) reflect whichever Spheres apply to the feat in question. Transforming an object into air or fire would by Matter 2/ Forces 2, while liquefying it would simply be Matter 2.

Given the flexibility of the Spheres, there may be several options when performing particular feat. The methods listed below are simply the easiest ways to cast a spell, not necessarily the only ways to do it.

BODY MAGICK

Adapt to Environment	Life 2 (3)
Animate Corpse or Parts	Life 2/ Prime 2

Cause/ Cure Disease	Life 2 (3)
Cosmetic Alteration	Life 3
Create Body	Life 2 (simple) or 5 (complex)/ Prime 2
Duplicate Body	Life 5/ Prime 2
Grow New Limbs or Other Features	Life 3 (4)
Heal/ Harm Living Being	Life 2 (3)
Heal/ Harm Fae	Life 3/ Mind 3
Heal/ Harm Vampire	Life 3/ Matter 2
Heal/ Harm Werecreature	Life 3/ Spirit 2
Increase Physique/ Traits	Life 3 (4)
Increase/ Reduce Speed	Time 3
Revive Dead	Life 4/ Spirit 4/ Prime 3
Rot Body	Entropy 4 (or Life 4)
Shapeshift	Life 4 (5)
Soak Aggravated Damage	Life 3
Transform into Element	Life 3/ (appropriate elemental Sphere)

FATE & FORTUNE

Alter Probability	Entropy 2
Bless/ Curse	Entropy 3/ Life 3
Cause Decay	Entropy 3+
Spot Flaws	Entropy 1

OBJECTS & ELEMENTS

Call Storm	Forces 4/ Prime 2
Conjure Element	Forces 3/ Prime 2 (fire, wind); or Matter 3/Prime 2 (earth, metal, water); or Life 3/ Prime 2 (wood)
Conjure New Object	Matter 3+/ Prime 2
Conjure "Physical" Illusion	Forces 2+/ Prime 2
Direct Existing Elements	Forces 2+
Disintegrate an Object	Entropy 3/ Time 3 (or Matter 3)
Invisibility/ Silence Field	Forces 2
Invisibility on Living Being	Forces 2/ Life 2
Levitation/ Flying	Forces 2+ (or Correspondence 3/ Life or Matter 2)
Speed/ Slow Velocity	Forces 2+
Transform Objects	Matter 2+/ (appropriate Sphere) 2
Transform Forces	Forces 3+/ (appropriate Sphere) 2

PERCEPTION & PSYCHIC POWERS		Fuel New Pattern	Prime 2 / appropriate Sphere
Astral Projection	Mind 4+		
Clairvoyance	Correspondence 2 (or Mind 3 / Correspondence 2)		Prime 3
Conceal/ Alter Aura	Mind 1 or Prime 2		
Conceal Avatar	Spirit 2 / Mind 1		
Conceal Thoughts	Mind 1		
Conjure Mental Illusions	Mind 2+		
Influence Mood	Mind 2		
Influence Subconscious	Mind 3+		
Mind Control	Mind 4		
Prophecy/ Hindsight	Mind 2 / Time 2 (or Time 2)		
Scramble Thoughts	Mind 3		
See Through Another's Eyes	Mind 3		
Sense Energies	(appropriate Sphere) 1		
Share Perceptions	Mind 1 / (appropriate Sphere) 1		
Shield Mind	Mind 2		
Tear Mind Apart	Mind 3 (Mind 3 / Life 3 for agg. Damage)		
Telepathy	Mind 3		
Telekinesis	Forces 2+		
Translate Languages	Mind 3 (Mind 3 / Forces 2 for a group)		
QUINTESSENCE ENERGY		SPIRIT POWERS	
Absorb Quintessence	Prime 3	Bless/ Curse	Entropy 3
Channel Quintessence	Prime 3	Command Spirit	Mind 4 / Spirit 4
Destroy by Draining Quintessence	Prime 4 (object) or Prime 5 (creature)	Conjure Spirit	Spirit 3
Drain Node	Prime 4	Drain Spirit's Essence	Prime 4 / Spirit 4
Drain Quintessence	Prime 3	Harm Spirit/ Wraith	Spirit 3
		Open/ Close Gateway	Spirit 4
		See Spirits	Spirit 1
		Speak to Spirits	Spirit 2
		Step Sideways	Spirit 3
		Touch Spirit	Spirit 2
TIME & DISTANCE *			
		Affect Distant Object/ Being	Correspondence 2+
		Aging/ Reversing Age	Time 3 + Life 4 (living being) or Matter 2 (object)
		Conjure Earthly Being	Correspondence 4 / Life 2
		Create Multiple Images	Correspondence 3 (or Forces 2+)/ Prime 2
		Create Multiple Objects	Correspondence 5 / Matter 3 / Prime 2
		Open Gateway Between Locations	Correspondence 4
		"Rewind" Time	Time 3
		Set Time Trigger	Time 4
		Speed/ Slow Time	Time 3
		Teleport	Correspondence 3 (4)
		Time Travel	Time 5

* = Such Effects are almost always vulgar magick.

Toll for the Trolls



Each city has a secret underclass. You'll notice some members of this occult fellowship panhandling for change, hitch-hiking at the verge of an interstate highway, or wrapped in blanket-cocoons in the lighted doorways of consumer society. Most of these people, though, you *won't* see unless they want to be seen. It's not to their benefit to be too visible, after all, because visibility makes them targets. As far as most people are concerned, these folks are *un*-people: the homeless, the insane, the scary dude or muttering lady wheeling a cart of cast-offs on her way to who-knows-where. And yet, off the grid of everyday citizenship, enlightenment and Awakening may be found.

The Bridge Troll Cabal is one of many “street families” based in Seattle, Washington – a city whose paradoxes of wealth and ruin nurture an unusually large homeless population. Although their name suggests a group based in the Fremont neighborhood, camped out by the big concrete troll-statue underneath the Aurora Bridge, these particular “bridge trolls” got their name from a squat beneath an I-5 underpass, tucked into a nook near the downtown exits. That nook, however, is a blind – one of several false encampments that the Bridge Trolls use to stay out of sight. And that’s because one of the “trolls” has a powerful enemy... one who’ll cause untold misery to the entire group if and when he ever finds them.

The Bridge Troll Cabal is an introductory group of low-level “gutter mages” and an array of related characters. Meant to familiarize new players with *Mage: The Ascension 20th Anniversary Edition*, this group can be used as player-characters, supporting characters, inspirations for your original creations, or perhaps even enemies in a saga of your own design. Despite their Seattle origins, these characters could be dropped into any urban setting. Their home-city isn’t important in the grand scheme of things. Wherever people gather into cities, there’ll be folks who “fall through the cracks.”

That doesn’t make them any less enlightened. It simply means they’re human.

The Dirty Side of the Street

For a lot of obvious reasons, the full scope of homeless survival-tactics and street-level existence go beyond the scope of this *Mage* quickstart booklet. For more details, check out websites about homelessness and runaway kids; books like *Raised by Wolves*, by Jim Goldberg, *Rachel and Her Children*, by Jonathan Kozol, and *All God’s Children*, by Rene Denfield; and the World of Darkness sourcebooks *Destiny’s Price* and *The Orphan’s Survival Guide*.

The Cabal

People fall between the cracks of mainstream society for lots of reasons. Some run away from abusive situations, while others collapse from addiction or other diseases. Many suffer some calamity that robs them of the resources (financial, emotional, social or otherwise) that they need to retain homes and jobs. A few drop out voluntarily, fed up with the apparently mindless grind. And then, there are folks whose Awakening blows their old lives straight to hell. Faced with sublime insights and frightening powers, they escape into the shadows until they can sort things out again. Many of them never rejoin mainstream society.

The Bridge Trolls wound up on the streets for different reasons. Each of them, however, realized that the “real world” most people accept is actually a trembling lie. Some of them – Khan and Synder in particular – had mystic training that allowed them to master their gifts to some extent. Others, like Jinx and Sabra, broke through into awareness without the cushioning presence of community or mentors. Chopper’s sort of in the middle, a self-taught metaphysical genius whose talents don’t seem “magical” to her. Led to one another through fate or chance, these five mages have adopted one another as “family” ... the best family, in several cases, they’ve ever known.

The core of the Bridge Troll Cabal consists of:

- **Khan, the leader** – eldest, biggest, and most experienced of the Trolls.
- **Synder, the charisma-bomb** – the group’s face... and, when need be, its fist as well.
- **Jinx, the crazy punk** – spiritsighted mistress of good luck and bad fortune.
- **Sabra, the silent shaman** – wounded empath and intuitive beast-friend.
- **Chopper, the mad scientist** – genius tech-head with a gift for impossible machines.
- **Soot, the spirit-crow** – Synder’s “familiar,” or spirit counterpart.
- **Chubby, Badge and Fenris** – the canine “honor guard” that protects the group at large.

From time to time, the Trolls pick up “strays”: other desperate souls, usually teenagers, who need a bit of guidance and someone to watch their backs. Each “troll” began as someone else’s “stray,” after all, and all five of them remember what it’s like to need a friend. Founders Khan and Synder both consider one another “strays,” and both of them are right. The various members of their “Cabal” (the name is a half-serious joke on Synder’s part) started off as strays who stuck around for a while. Many other kids have cycled through the group as well – sometimes dying or falling into addiction, most leaving after conflicts with someone else in the group.

Squats, Gigs and Scams

After an initial period of desperation, the Bridge Trolls have acquired a number of squats around town: illegal “homes” in abandoned buildings and hidden corners of Seattle’s downtown area. Thanks to Chopper and Khan, those squats have been beefed up with mundane traps, magickal wards, and weird machines cobbled together from tossed-out technology. The group moves between locations, crashing in the many abandoned buildings that fill Seattle’s overpriced neighborhoods. Each squat gets a “makeover”: sigils, tripwires, the occasional allied spirit (recruited by Jinx), and various animals that Sabra befriends. Unusually clean by the standards of the “average” street-level squat (Khan runs a pretty tight ship), these shelters still feature piles of oddly-ridged contraptions and technological junk that Chopper uses to keep herself occupied. Several of these machines work surprisingly well, especially considering that the squats don’t have electricity, Internet connections, or other connections to the city’s power-grid.

For the most part, the Bridge Trolls score food and money through a combination of panhandling (that is, begging), scamming (ripping off people who supposedly deserve it) and *busking*: performing on the streets for change. Because Seattle requires a performer to secure a busking permit before she hits the streets, the Trolls prefer a form of guerilla theatre where they show up, set up, lay out a collection box for donations, juggle or hoop for a few minutes, grab the cash, and get the hell outta Dodge before cops or rival buskers show up to shake them down. Synder and Jinx own a handful of scrounged or improvised “spin-toys”: hula hoops, balls, weighted sticks, and *poi*: chains and cords weighted on one end and then spun around in fascinating patterns. Every so often, they manage to score enough cash or favors to get some white gas or kerosene, light their gear on fire, and then use a combination of skill and magick to avoid ugly accidents. When that’s possible, the Trolls spread the word through networks of contacts, snatch up a promising location, and stage illegal fire-shows around the Fremont, Queen Anne and University districts. These “guerilla gigs” have given the Trolls a whispered fame throughout the Seattle art community, and supply enough food, cash, and playmates to keep them happy for a week or two.

Even so, Khan likes to keep a low profile – and for good reasons. His old mentor, Big Ron Berrigan, has some nasty habits, and would like to “make an impression” on Khan and his tribe. It’d probably be wise to move on out of town, but Khan and Synder are pretty stubborn. They *like* their hometown, thank you very much, and moving on would rob them of the precious networks of friends, contacts, and other resources that keep the Bridge Trolls going. Besides, Synder and Jinx have a relationship going with the Spirit of Seattle itself, and feel a responsibility to the city’s homeless kids. Big Rob uses the underground as his personal hunting ground, and he and his “pack” of slumming assholes need to be taken down, hard. Better, then, to trap the stalker than to leave their home behind. And so, Khan and his pack of Trolls keep an essentially low profile, gather their resources, deepen their paranormal skills, and lay plans to make Big Ron disappear for good.

Khan Salvatore

Life is war. That's the message Darryl Salvatore absorbed while growing up in gang-torn Los Angeles. A child during the crack wars of the 1990s, "D" saw neighbors gunned down and friends carted off to jail long before they reached legal age. His mixed-race ancestry – part Latino, part-Italian, part-Turkish and part-Apache – dropped him into the margins of an already marginalized society. Running with the gangs in his teens, D found himself staring at two options: prison or the military. He opted to join the Army right after his 18th birthday, and reinvented himself by adopting the name Khan ("Ruler") in place of his old gang moniker.

As a darkish young man of "uncertain" heritage, Khan quickly wound up on the wrong end of post-9/11 Islamaphobia. Despite his Italian surname, folks kept assuming he was Muslim, and consequently making his life difficult. Khan's initial enlistment ended after a raucous tour in Iraq. During that tour, the isolated Khan had bonded with a fellow outsider named Duncan Fallon – a reputed Satanist, thanks to the demon tattooed across his back. Duncan encouraged that misunderstanding, but revealed to Khan that his true spiritual path was *Pagan*, not Satanic. By the time Khan left the service with a skin-of-his-teeth honorable discharge, the angry young man had acquired a Pagan warrior-ethic and a case of PTSD.

Yet despite his attitude and damage, Khan displayed keen intelligence and a bust-ass work-ethic. Ronald Berrigan, a Syndicate talent-scout, spotted Khan's aptitudes and quickly recruited him into "the business" – not as a leg-breaker but as a manager within an IT branch. Within a few months, Khan had absorbed an understanding of Enlightened business-culture and the principles of computer systems. If it hadn't been for Berrigan's innate corruption, Khan might have stayed with that firm for life. Instead, he poked his nose into company secrets, didn't like the smell, and got out just before Berrigan could bring the hammer down on him.

Between his mentors Fallen and Berrigan, Khan Awakened to the complex interplay of cosmic forces and hidden conspiracies. And so, when he lost himself in the underworld of Seattle's street-culture, the former gangbanger

brought metaphysical skill and formidable knowledge with him. Clicking with a cute street-performer named Synder, Khan began nurturing his better nature. Now he brings his hard-won skills to the homeless population, helping kids survive a world that's far more ruthless than it appears to be.

Image: A stocky dude whose constant scowl breaks into an occasional grin, Khan stands just over six feet tall, with roughly 240 pounds of bulk and muscle. At 28, he's older than most Seattle street "kids," and thus holds a position of obvious authority. Khan's mingled heritage is obvious from his hooked nose and dark skin, but the details remain elusive. Because he speaks fluent Spanish, some Arabic and a bit of Farsi, people aren't sure how to categorize him outside his clearly badass nature. His deep voice sounds like it's used to shouting; these days, though, he prefers to speak softly and carry two big fists. Synder has tempered his angry edge, and he can be a real softie once you get past that survivor's façade. If the two of them start arguing, though, everyone in the vicinity knows it... and stays very far away!

Roleplaying Tips: Your life has been a fight, and so you're often ready to throw down. The psychological carnage of Iraq, and the alienation even among your "comrades," has left you distrusting almost everyone. Deep beneath your gruff armor, there's a hard-bitten Papa Bear who's seen enough pain and damage to last several lifetimes. If and when you choose to protect someone, that person is safe from almost everyone except themselves. Your own safety, however, depends upon keeping a low profile. Ronald Berrigan still has folks looking for you, and if they find you, everything and everyone you value will be destroyed.



Focus: At Synder's urging, Khan has adopted the tools of flow-arts: hoops, poi and so forth. His preferred instruments, though, involve complex mathematical formulas and diagrams (which – in the form of graffiti – secure the Bridge Troll nest), martial arts, weapons, the intense concentration of a warrior and leader, and the social domination he has practiced since his childhood. Khan can employ potent Mind and Spirit Arts with a silent glare, and he prefers this tactic over violence these days, if only because violence creates unnecessary complications. Even so, he believes that life really *is* a war; survival depends

upon having the right weapons, and knowing when and how to use them well.

Avatar: Khan's Avatar appears in dreams as a guiding mentor. Typically, that mentor speaks in Duncan's voice and wears Duncan's features. Every so often, he appears as Berrigan instead. In recent years, that mentor has been Khan himself – an older, stronger, wiser Khan whose magnificence embodies that name. And sometimes, just sometimes, he dreams of a tiger-self that speaks in riddles as it chases him through ruined wilderness and the shadows of his own youth.



Name: Khan Salvatore
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Guardian
Demeanor: Machine
Essence: Questing

Affiliation: None/Ex Syndicate
Sect: Bridge Trolls
Concept:

Attributes

Physical

Strength	●●●○○
Dexterity	●●○○○
Stamina	●●○○○

Social

Charisma	●●●○○
Manipulation	●●○○○
Appearance	●●○○○

Mental

Perception	●●○○○
Intelligence	●●●○○
Wits	●○○○○

Abilities

Talents

Alertness	●●●○○
Art	○○○○○
Athletics	●○○○○
Awareness	●●○○○
Brawl <small>Dirty Fighting</small>	●●●○○
Empathy	●○○○○
Expression	●●○○○
Intimidation	●●●○○
Leadership	●●○○○
Streetwise <small>Survivor</small>	●●●○○
Subterfuge	○○○○○

Skills

Crafts <small>Carpentry</small>	●●○○○
Drive	●○○○○
Etiquette	○○○○○
Firearms	●●○○○
Martial Arts <small>Tae Kwon Do</small>	●●○○○
Meditation	●●○○○
Melee	●●●○○
Research	○○○○○
Stealth	●○○○○
Survival	●○○○○
Technology	●●●○○

Knowledges

Academics	●●○○○
Computer	●●○○○
Cosmology	○○○○○
Enigmas	●●○○○
Esoterica <small>Yoga</small>	●○○○○
Investigation	○○○○○
Law <small>Cop Talk</small>	●●●●○
Medicine	○○○○○
Occult	●●○○○
Politics	○○○○○
Science	○○○○○

Spheres

Correspondence	○○○○○
Entropy	○○○○○
Forces	●●○○○

Life	●●○○○
Matter	●●○○○
Mind	●●○○○

Prime	●○○○○
Spirit	●●○○○
Time	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds

Allies	●●●○○
Arcane	●●●○○
Contacts	●●○○○
Sanctum	●●○○○
Spies	●●○○○
Avatar	○○○○○

Arete

● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Health

Bruised	-0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hurt	-1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injured	-1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wounded	-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mauled	-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crippled	-5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incapacitated		<input type="checkbox"/>

Other Traits

Pharmacopia	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Quintessence



Paradox

Experience

Synder

For some folks, the biggest prisons exist in their heads. And for Cynthia Maria Tate, that prison took the form of extreme dyslexia and dyscalculia, resulting in chronic insecurity despite her many accomplishments. Remarkably physical, Cynthia blasted through gymnastics, swimming, track and field, and several disciplines of dance and martial arts – the latter in spite of her brain's stubborn refusal to process katas correctly. When she wasn't in class or practice, though, Cynthia favored manga, *World of Warcraft*, and the Harry Potter and *Lord of the Rings* films. (Her dyslexia prevented her from reading the books.) Inside, she saw a hero – smart, courageous, gracefully badass. Everyone else, though, saw her differently. Between her athletic prowess, blond hair, model-grade looks, and dyslexic mental blocks, Cynthia got tagged as a cute but stupid jock... a judgment she absorbed but never could accept.

And so, she drank. A lot.

It's not uncommon in the jock crowd; hell, it tends to be weekly ritual. And yet, the struggle to reconcile the young Amazon in her head and the blonde ditz everybody saw in front of them drove Cynthia to self-punishing extremes of athletic accomplishment and extreme intoxication. Rejected from the fantasy realm for being a "fake geek girl," and treated like a prize by people she'd begun to loathe, Cynthia drank herself literally to death one night.

But did not stay dead for long.

Hovering over her dying body, surrounded by her so-called "friends," Cynthia heard a soft voice ask her "Would you like to try that again?"

"Try what?" she responded, without a voice.

"Living."

"Yeah."

And so, time seemed to wind back around itself, bringing her to the moment when she started to fall. Instead of passing out, she shoved her fingers down her throat. The resulting mess got her kicked out of the social circle she'd begun to hate... but she survived that night and took up a different path... the Path, shortly afterward, of an initiated Ecstatic mage with Thanatoic tendencies.

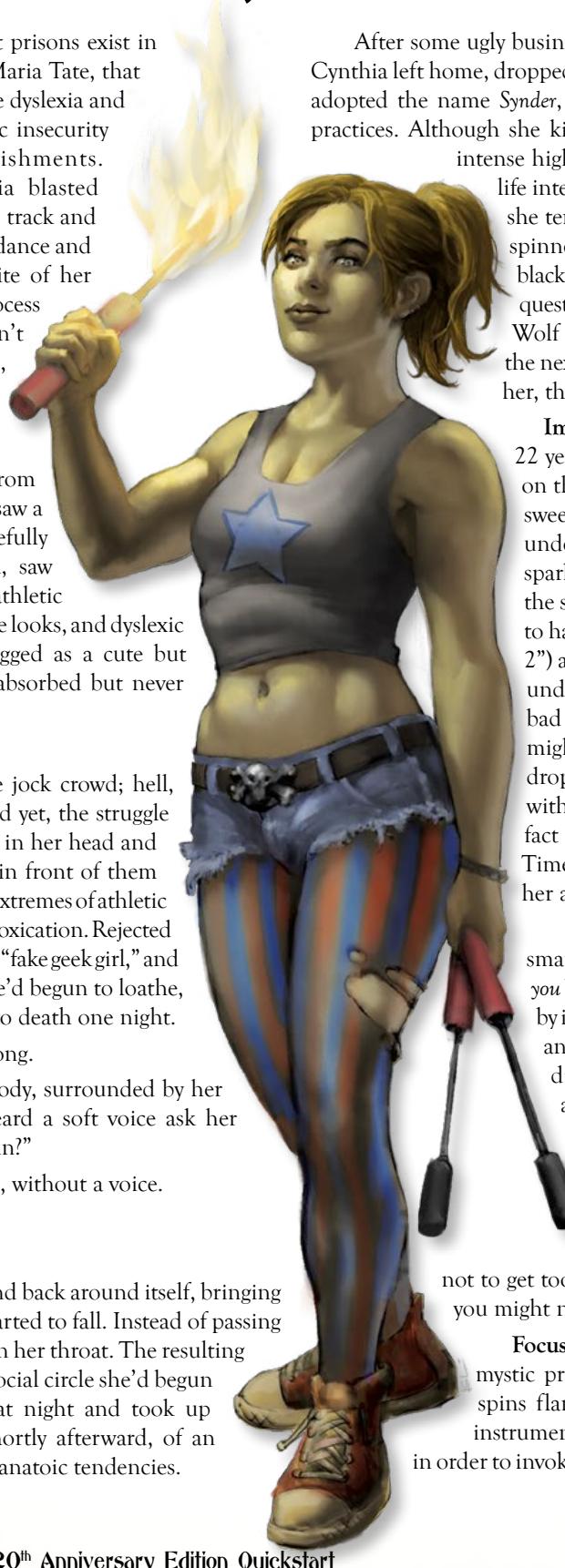
After some ugly business she won't discuss with anyone, Cynthia left home, dropped out of her occult fellowships, and adopted the name *Synder*, which plays off her fire-spinning practices. Although she kicked the booze, her addiction to intense highs and lows continues to keep her life interesting. Sweet but temperamental, she tends to go through friends like fire-spinners go through white fuel and wet black towels. At the moment, her ongoing quest has her playing the proactive Mama Wolf for the Bridge Troll Cabal. Where the next turn of life's roulette wheel takes her, though, is anybody's guess.

Image: A lean-muscled young woman 22 years old, Synder seems out of place on the streets. She looks too clean, too sweet, too pretty, too *together* to be living under a bridge. And yet, there's a manic spark behind her eyes, and feral hints to the smile she flashes just as she's about to hand out a beatdown. Her height (5' 2") and looks (stunning) lead people to underestimate her, and that's a really bad idea... for while her partner Khan might be the heavyweight, Synder can drop the average street-rat in a fight without bothering with magick. The fact that she understands the Arts of Time, Fate, Spirit and Life itself make her a nasty person to oppose.

Roleplaying Tips: You actually *are* smart – far more intelligent than even *you* believe yourself to be – but hobbled by insecurity, self-destructive impulses, and a wicked case of sensory processing disorders. Magick, martial training, and the flow-arts (fire-spinning, juggling, hooping) help you sort through the craziness in your head. Whipsaw back and forth between friendly nurturing and screaming rage, but be careful

not to get too close to the edge. Next time out, you might not get a chance to come back.

Focus: Like her other disciplines, Synder's mystic practice is based in physicality. She spins flame, staves, hoops, poi, and other instruments into dazzling complex patterns in order to invoke a sense of deep focus. Synder also



juggles knives, balls, and other goodies; meditates quietly several times a day, usually by concentrating on circular designs; and uses intense exercise as a channel for the altered state of mind she seeks. Ever since her “reboot,” she never drinks or uses other recreational chemicals. Despite her rough surroundings – or perhaps because of them – Synder trusts that “it’s all good if you believe it is.” To her, life is a miracle that can end at any moment... and thus, it’s worth cherishing. Even on the worst days, it seems to beat the alternative!

In addition to her innate talents, Synder has a familiar: a crow named Soot, whose guidance helps Synder learn things no mere human should be able to know. Soot scouts out secrets

– usually about interesting new talents or threats – and brings them home to the Cabal. That corvid associate, of course, is no simple crow. Soot’s actually a small embodiment of Seattle itself, wrapped up in the feathered form of the city’s most famous birds.

Avatar: To date, Synder has never seen the face behind the voice that gave her a second chance. She still hears it, though – a soft, vaguely feminine voice that sometimes speaks in fire but most often comes to her during dreams and meditations. Once, however, she thought she’d caught a glimpse of the face behind that voice. The bolt of pure adrenalized terror that woke her up that night has left her hoping that she never sees that face again.

Chopper

We live in a throwaway society, and Seattleites throw away more tech than the residents of any other city except maybe Tokyo. Yolanda Bender Smith had a knack for taking junk and making it work in new and unexpected ways, and that knack translated into job-offers around town even before she graduated from that crummy Central District high school. Disgusted with the willful stupidity of her classmates (and often bullied for “acting too white”), Yolanda quit school at 16, took one of those jobs, and sued – successfully – for emancipation from her parents. Sadly, it’s one thing to be smart enough to make tech dance to your tune, and quite another to have the life-experience to keep a job, an apartment, a reliable bank balance, and friends. Within roughly a year, she’d been fired, evicted, and dropped into Seattle’s vast homeless population. That experience broke her natural talent into full-blown Awakening. Since then, she’s been a Dumpster-diving genius, crafting workable and sometimes miraculous tech out of other people’s junk.

Taking up the street-name Chopper (from her propensity for “chopping” technology into new and interesting shapes), Yolanda caught Khan’s eye shortly after he bolted from his own tech gig. When Khan and Synder formed the Bridge Trolls, Chopper became their first “little sister.” She’s still got a bit of a crush on Khan, but sublimates those feelings by working up impossible machines based on theories that toss conventional physics off the nearest overpass. Those machines now provide comforts and resources that the group would never have without her.

As speed-reading self-taught prodigy (with some coaching from Khan, and metaphysical lessons from Synder), Chopper would make a natural candidate for the Society of Ether or Virtual Adepts if she ever realized that those groups exist. She’d probably make a resourceful Technocrat, too, if she could learn to follow directions. Right now, though, she’s coasting on her own brilliance and the endless trove of books (tech and otherwise) that she snatches from Dumpsters, bookstores and yard-sales. Librarians at the Seattle Public Library recognize her on sight, and she’s officially banned from their premises for stealing one too many books. Despite that exile from the library’s stock, one librarian named Dami tips Chopper off when the library’s dumping damaged

or overstocked books. And so, though Khan and Synder keep reminding Chopper that they’re running out of room, the girl still burns through all the reading material she can get her hands on. Like her scavenged technology, books and magazines seem to be eternally useful and constantly within reach.

Image: Tall and rangy, Chopper looks and acts older than her 18 years. She favors men’s shirts and jackets for the deep pockets they contain. Combat boots protect her feet when she’s digging through Dumpsters and trash. The pockets of her ragged cargo pants bulge with tools, books, and little bits of tech. Jinx calls her “McGyver,” and Chopper’s standard response (“Whiteboy WISHES he was me”) is a running joke between the girls. Her messy half-fro suggests a young black Einstein, and she speaks with the rapid precision and slightly flat inflection of a borderline Aspie with OCD from hell.

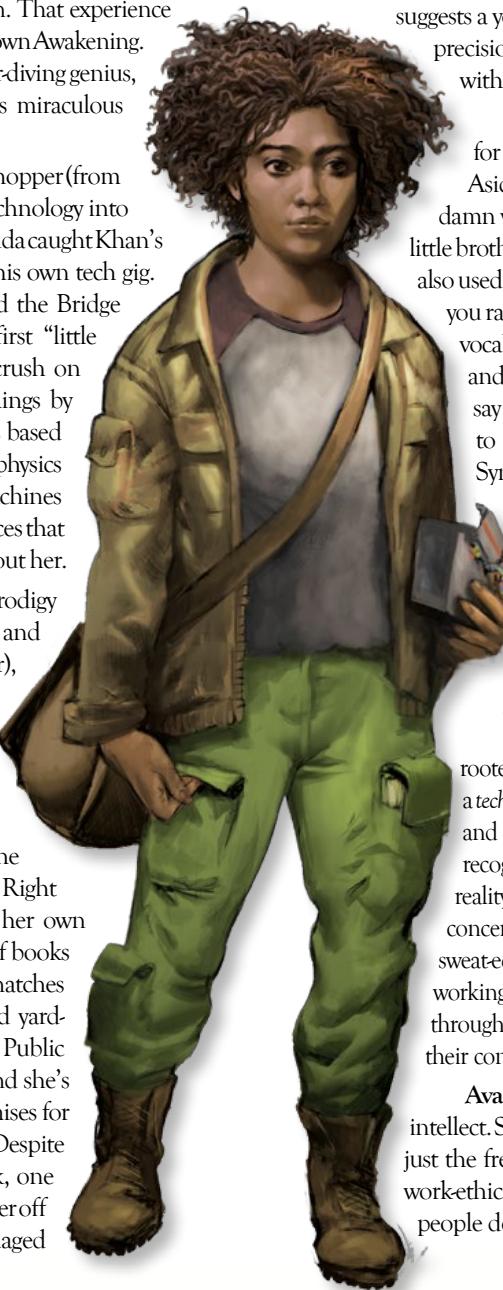
Roleplaying Tips: You’re used to being too smart for other folks to understand, let alone actually *like*.

Aside from Khan and Synder, you truly don’t give a damn what anyone thinks of you. (Okay, Sabra’s like your little brother, but Jinx isn’t even worth your contempt.) You’re also used to being shoved into other people’s idiotic boxes, so you rarely strive to be anything but brisk and erudite. Your vocabulary is vast, thanks to compulsive reading habits and a background in esoteric sciences. Most of what you say goes over everyone else’s head; only Khan seems to comprehend your technical knowledge, and only Synder (who is, you know, far smarter than anyone else realizes) can wrap her head around your paraphysical theories. As the smartest one in any given room, you simply do what you do and leave the rest of the world choking on your dust.

Focus: Chopper doesn’t view herself as any kind of “mage.” She’s using science, plain and simple – a science more esoteric than

conventionally accepted principles, of course, but rooted in sound theory nonetheless! And so, she’s essentially a *technomancer*, someone who “divines through technology” and finds a deeper level of truth that few people ever recognize. As a practice, Chopper employs weird science and reality-hacking, channeled through machines, gadgets, tools, concentrated brilliance (essentially meditation), and lots of sweat-equity poured into the junk she digs up and restores to working condition. Her ravenous reading habits focus her skills through books as well, with her restless mind sorting through their contents to make radical new connections.

Avatar: Chopper’s inner genius is just that: her own intellect. She doesn’t perceive strange spirits or alternate selves, just the frenetic pace of endless connections and a fanatical work ethic that illuminates pathways between what other people do and what she’s capable of achieving.



Name: Chopper
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Mad Scientist
Demeanor: Loner
Essence: Dynamic

Affiliation: None
Sect: Bridge Trolls
Concept: Scrap-Tech Genius

Attributes

Physical

Strength	●●○○○
Dexterity	●●●○○
Stamina	●●○○○

Social

Charisma	●●○○○
Manipulation	●●○○○
Appearance	●●●○○

Mental

Perception	Patterns	●●●○○
Intelligence	Genius	●●●●●
Wits		●●●○○

Abilities

Talents

Alertness	●○○○○
Art	○○○○○
Athletics	●○○○○
Awareness	●●●○○
Brawl	●○○○○
Empathy	○○○○○
Expression	○○○○○
Intimidation	●○○○○
Leadership	○○○○○
Streetwise	●●○○○
Subterfuge	●○○○○

Skills

Crafts	Metalwork	●●●○○
Drive		●○○○○
Etiquette		○○○○○
Firearms		○○○○○
Martial Arts		○○○○○
Meditation		●●○○○
Melee		●○○○○
Research	Obscure Data	●●●○○
Stealth		●●○○○
Survival		○○○○○
Technology	Jury-Rig	●●●○○

Knowledges

Academics		●●●○○
Computer		●●●○○
Cosmology		○○○○○
Enigmas		●●○○○
Esoterica	Wierd Science	●●●○○
Investigation		○○○○○
Law		○○○○○
Medicine		○○○○○
Occult		●○○○○
Politics		○○○○○
Science		●●●○○

Spheres

Correspondence	●○○○○
Entropy	○○○○○
Forces	●●●○○

Life		○○○○○
Matter		●●●○○
Mind		●○○○○

Prime		●●●○○
Spirit		●○○○○
Time		○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds

Avatar	●●○○○
Contacts	●●●○○
Sanctum	●●○○○
Library	●●○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Arete

● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Health

Bruised	-0	□
Hurt	-1	□
Injured	-1	□
Wounded	-2	□
Mauled	-2	□
Crippled	-5	□
Incapacitated		□

Other Traits

Area Knowledge: Seattle	●●●○○
Crafts: Electronics	●●○○○
Crafts: High Tech	●●○○○
Science: Engineering	●●○○○
Science: Physics	●●●○○
Security	●●○○○
	○○○○○

Quintessence



Paradox

Experience

Jinx

Nina Harris was a punk – not in the rock sense, but in the “don’t give a rat’s ass” sense. Kicked out the house for getting caught having sex with her boyfriend *and* her girlfriend in her alcoholic mother’s bed, she hit the streets of Seattle looking for shelter and a chance to run on her own. Nina took on the name *Jinx* (her mother’s nickname for the reckless girl), and beat the living hell out of the first chicken hawk to swoop down and try and try his luck with her. That didn’t go over so well with the pimp’s friends, however, and Jinx finished her first night on the streets by sleeping under a bridge and praying she’d wake up alive.

Jinx doesn’t pray like most folks do. Having rejected her dead father’s attempts at Catholicism, she’d checked out neopaganism – partly from rebellion, and partly because she thought she heard spirits talking to her. She wasn’t wrong about that second part. The Spirit of Seattle itself (or at least one of its many aspects) whispered to her underneath that bridge. By that point, Jinx had already claimed a half-serious devotion to a goddess-figure, too: Risk, the Lady of Luck and Fate. Jinx found herself praying to Risk that night... and Risk answered in some unexpected ways.

The next day, Jinx met and befriended three other street-mystics: Synder, Chopper and Khan. Later that same day, while skateboarding through fast traffic, Jinx almost got nailed by a speeding car. Hitting a random pothole, the driver swerved and smashed into a lamppost. Jinx herself flipped her board and wound up dazed on a sidewalk that she swore was talking to her. In her memory, Jinx had been lifted clear of the traffic and the crash by a burning black-skinned angel. “That’s Talon,” said the sidewalk as the angel nodded; “She’ll be taking care of you from now on, in the name of Risk.”

And so now, “in the name of Risk,” Jinx works with Synder, Khan, and their friends in a campaign of street survival. Although they’re far too small to make a real difference in the bigger affairs of Seattle’s city life, the Bridge Trolls watch the fringes of that city’s street community, picking off its worst predators while nurturing folks that everyone else would prefer to forget.



Image: A tough-eyed mix of German and Choctaw heritage, Jinx is 16 years old with rough-chopped chin-length hair dyed (badly) in blue and purple streaks. Smeary dark mascara and an array of fierce facial piercings accentuate her face. Overlarge ragged death-metal T-shirts conceal her solid athletic build. A former gymnast, Jinx keeps in shape with rigorous exercise, skateboarding, and an especially risky form of parkour. Hoodies, torn leggings, and a beat-up Utilikilt compliment her battered Doc Martins and a thrift-shop biker jacket decorated with whatever Jinx can stab through or draw on its shell. Lean and pixie-grinned, she’s about 5’ 7” but comes across as shorter than she really is. Fingerless gloves cover her punch-roughened knuckles. Jinx looks like trouble, smells like a street-kid, and manages to make that all look good.

Roleplaying Tips: You’ve devoted to Risk, and so taking chances is a sacred act. You’re not bad at heart, really, but you can be a pain in the ass. To your street-family, however, you’re blood-loyal and generous. Authority is a joke, pain is a flavor, and if you live to reach age 18, nobody will be more surprised than you.

Focus: As far as Jinx is concerned, we live in a world of gods and monsters, taking whatever we can grab through whatever means we can afford.

She sees the world as a living thing, invested with spirits that most people never understand.

To get by in that world a person needs to have allies, take risks, and learn whatever she can learn about the forces that seem forbidden to anyone without the balls to deal with them on their own terms. As a practice, Jinx uses a form of gutter-magick witchcraft. Her instruments are coins, dice, graffiti sigils, prayers to Risk, wild chances, painful ordeals, and sacrifices of blood (typically her own) that’s shed by doing stupid things and living through the experience.

Avatar: Jinx’s potent Avatar, Talon, appears to her as a feminine angel with red-black skin, black-feathered wings, and a haze of fire. As far as Jinx is concerned, Talon is as real, as physical, as alive as anyone else she knows. Thus far, no one else has seen Talon appear. Synder, though, seems to be able to smell the hot-iron smell of that spirit, and hear Talon’s smooth yet hungry voice.

Name: Jinx
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature: Seeker
Demeanor: Rebel
Essence: Dynamic

Affiliation: None
Sect: Bridge Trolls
Concept: Wiseass Street Punk

Attributes

Physical

Strength	●●○○○
Dexterity	●●●○○
Stamina	●●●○○

Social

Charisma	●●●○○
Manipulation	●●●○○
Appearance	●●●○○

Mental

Perception	●●○○○
Intelligence	●●○○○
Wits	●●○○○

Abilities

Talents

Alertness	●●○○○
Art	○○○○○
Athletics	●○○○○
Awareness	●●○○○
Brawl	●●●○○
Empathy	○○○○○
Expression	○○○○○
Intimidation	●●○○○
Leadership	○○○○○
Streetwise	●●○○○
Subterfuge	○○○○○

Skills

Crafts	○○○○○
Drive	●○○○○
Etiquette	●○○○○
Firearms	○○○○○
Martial Arts	○○○○○
Meditation	○○○○○
Melee	●○○○○
Research	○○○○○
Stealth	●○○○○
Survival	○○○○○
Technology	○○○○○

Knowledges

Academics	●●○○○
Computer	●●○○○
Cosmology	○○○○○
Enigmas	○○○○○
Esoterica	Chaos Magick ●○○○○
Investigation	○○○○○
Law	●○○○○
Medicine	○○○○○
Occult	●○○○○
Politics	○○○○○
Science	○○○○○

Spheres

Correspondence	○○○○○
Entropy	●●○○○
Forces	●○○○○

Life	●●○○○
Matter	○○○○○
Mind	○○○○○

Prime	○○○○○
Spirit	●○○○○
Time	○○○○○

Advantages

Backgrounds

Allies	●●○○○
Avatar	●●●○○
Mentor	●○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Arete

● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Willpower

● ● ● ● ● ○ ○ ○ ○ ○ ○

Health

Bruised	-0	□
Hurt	-1	□
Injured	-1	□
Wounded	-2	□
Mauled	-2	□
Crippled	-5	□
Incapacitated		□

Other Traits

Acrobatics	●●○○○
Area Knowledge: Seattle	○○○○○
Pharmacopeia	●○○○○
Seduction	●●○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○
	○○○○○

Quintessence



Experience

Sabra

It's too dangerous to be a girl. And so, Stephanie Bergamo chose to be a boy instead. Hacking her hair close to her scalp, she assumed the male name "Skip," much to her parents' disgust and her classmates' amusement. After a series of brutalizations known only to Sabra, Synder, and the perpetrators of those crimes, Skip left home, took on the name *Sabra*, and spent the better part of a year deepening the trauma by doing whatever it took to survive. As a result, Sabra almost never speaks, and watches the world through a haunted thousand-yard stare. Sometime during that nightmarish period, Sabra Awakened. Thanks to the damage, though, his mystic talents remain limited to empathy, uncanny perceptions of space and time, and a gift for dealing with animals. Such kinship has been a consistent fixture of Sabra's life; since his Awakening, however, that combination of talent and experience has blossomed into a preternatural (some have called it "freakish") affinity for beasts.

Sabra's always had a close connection to animals. Under every name, s/he's gotten along well with even the most unfriendly beasts. One of the many torments visited upon Stephanie during her awful years at home involved the beating of the family dog, Shelby, whenever Stephanie's dad was in a bad mood. And so now, as Sabra, the silent mage keeps three dogs as part of the Bridge Troll family, and flies into a rage if anyone dares to harm a dog in his presence. Those three dogs – Chubby (who's actually quite skinny), Badge and Fenris – eat before Sabra will feed himself. For obvious reasons, then, Sabra is bone-thin. Synder and Khan try to get him to eat more, but he quietly insists that the dogs get whatever food they need.



When necessary, Sabra communicates with his family through empathy (in game terms, Mind 2 magick). Most often, though, he prefers eloquent gestures and glares. His connection to animals requires no sounds at all, and can be unnervingly beautiful to watch. Although he does not affect the feral behavior that someone might expect from a "dog boy" (a nickname that certain folks dare to use in his presence... *once*), Sabra's bond recalls primal communion, not the clumsy "training" that other folks employ.

No Bridge Troll ever refers to Sabra as anything other than a boy. They all know he's biologically female, but respect the identity he has chosen. If anyone's stupid enough to claim otherwise, a nasty glare is only the beginning of the grief they'll catch from the rest of the group. And although many people think Sabra is mentally challenged, he's actually quite intelligent and eerily perceptive. His silence comes not from a lack of thought but from a refusal to share what's on his mind.

Image: Painfully thin and pale, Sabra wears oversized shirts, jackets and pants to conceal his feminine curves. Even as a boy, he's rather pretty – a fact he hides by slouching, scowling, and smearing dirt across his face. Not quite 16, he's been living as a boy since around puberty, and has gotten rather good at teen-male body language. His voice is high, however, which is another reason he rarely speaks. Sabra always has at least one dog close by, and makes friends with everything from rats to pigeons – a useful skill when he's panhandling to feed his pack.

Roleplaying Tips: It isn't safe to be who you once were, especially not on the streets. Sure, Synder and Jinx manage it, but they're tougher than you'll ever be. Not that boys are safe, either. There's no such thing as safety, really, and the only reason you're not raw meat walking is because you've got a pack to back you up. Honestly, animals – even the sick ones, even the mean ones – are better than most people. It's your responsibility, then, to be better than the average person. There's already too much pain in the world, after all, so why add more?

Focus: Though he'd never apply the word to himself, Sabra's an urban shaman: wounded, intuitive, guided by a bond with the living world and the spirits just out of sight. To him, that world is intrinsically divine, poisoned by human beings but ultimately greater than they are. He uses meditation, eye-contact, physical touch, self-sacrifice (cutting, silence and starvation) and ordeals (likewise) to focus his Arts, and he views those magicks as extensions of his spiritual connection to the living natural world.

Paradoxically, Sabra knows virtually nothing about living in the wilderness. He's been a city-kid all his life, and although he longs to join the wild world beyond the urban sprawl, he doesn't have the slightest idea what to do if he had the chance

to do so. Deep inside, that adds to his quiet shame; Sabra feels like he should run free in the wild, but is secretly terrified of what might happen if he tried.

Avatar: Sabra views his inner guiding self as a shadow that whispers to him in the masculine voice he strives to imitate with his real vocal chords. That shadow is Sabra himself, but stronger and more confident than his physical self. He also "feels" animals communicating with him in their natural "language," and has been able to understand them since early childhood. More often than not, it's this "animal sense" that Sabra connects with when performing what folks would call "magick." He doesn't believe that he's a "mage" himself, but that talent sure comes in handy...



The Family Dogs

Homeless folks, especially women, often keep dogs nearby. Such companions provide good company and excellent protection, and so although dogs demand a certain amount of extra food and attention (and carry fleas, and tend to smell awful in damp weather), most folks feel they're worth the hassles.

In Sabra's case, the three family dogs provide a touchstone for his innate need for animal companionship. Chubby's vaguely beagle-ish mutt (in game terms, a mid-sized dog), while Badge is a recued pit bull and Fenris has bits of German shepherd, husky and wolfhound mingled in a large, imposing frame. All three dogs adore Sabra, tolerate Jinx, and loyally protect the other members of their "pack."

Dogs inflict lethal damage with their teeth, and bashing damage with their claws.

Chubby

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 3, Awareness 3, Brawl 2, Empathy 2, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Willpower: 3

Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0 (three soak dice, total)

Attack: Bite for three dice; claw for two dice.

Badge and Fenris

Attributes: Strength 4, Dexterity 3, Stamina 3, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 3, Brawl 3, Empathy 2, Intimidation 2, Stealth 2, Survival 3

Willpower: 3

Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0 (three soak dice, total)

Attack: Bite for five dice; claw for three dice.

Spirit Entities

Existing just outside the material world, the entities often known as *spirits* (or, more rarely, *Umbrood*) share a distant yet connected relationship with the material world. A handful of people – like Sabra, Jinx, Synder and Khan – can sense and even interact with them. And so, the Bridge Troll Cabal deals occasionally with spirit-entities... some of them more frequently than others.

Spirit Traits

In addition to their metaphysical powers (referred to, in game terms, as *Charms*), all spirit entities have the following Traits:

Willpower: The "physical" Trait for spirit-beings, Willpower is essentially the Dexterity and Stamina for an Umbral entity.

Rage: A manifestation of spiritual fury, this Trait functions like an entity's Strength. When a spirit attacks someone, the Storyteller determines the damage by rolling one die for each point of Rage against difficulty 6. Each success equals one health level's worth of lethal damage. Mages can try to soak this damage, thanks to their Awakened Avatar, but most mortals cannot.

Gnosis: Reflecting a given spirit's intellect and wisdom, Gnosis functions as the spirit's Social and Mental Attributes.

Essence: The measure of a spirit's energy, Essence is more or less the Health Trait for Umbral entities. Each health level of damage reduces the Essence by one point; if that spirit reaches 0 Essence, its form gets dispelled for a while. Eventually, that spirit reforms in another place; in most cases, though, that happens quite a while afterward.

Unless they materialize, spirits remain immaterial. Most mortals cannot even see them, although certain animals and people notice the presence of strong entities even when they can't actually view those spirits. To touch an immaterial spirit, a person needs Spirit-Sphere magick at Rank 3 or higher. Spirits, for their part, cannot harm material creatures unless they employ the Materialize Charm or possess some other power that lets them interact with the material world... like, for example, the Possession Charm.

The full rules for spirits are too complex to explore in this booklet. Those systems appear in Chapter Nine of *Mage: The Ascension 20th Anniversary Edition*.

Totem Traits

Totem-spirits are too vast to be limited to the usual spirit Traits. Although a totem can manifest in a lesser form, the totem itself is immune to most forms of harm.

In place of the usual Traits, each totem-spirit entry has the following features:

Manifestations: When a totem sends an aspect of itself in physical form, that totem avatar usually manifests like an animal or human-life figure. Generally, the manifestation has the game-Traits of a related animal or character, although it can – at the Storyteller's discretion – be as powerful as the spirit (and the Storyteller) wants it to be.

Associations: As embodiments of animals, forces and ideas, totem spirits have "personalities" and attitudes when they deal with humankind. Shamans and other human allies take on these associations when they deal with totem spirits, and may attract the attention of a totem by living out its associations before the two of them even meet each other.

Brood: Most totems, especially animal-spirit totems, have a brood: lesser spirits in its "family." Such spirits reflect the totem's Associations and identity: Raven sends spirit-crows, crow-girls, and raven-men, while Blue Wave nurtures cravelings, ghosts, and "people" who are actually spirits in disguise. Unlike the totem itself, these spirits can be caught, fought or contained... although a mage who does such a thing had better watch out for the associated totem afterward unless that totem has sent its "broodling" to aid its human ally.

Abilities: If a totem adopts a human ally, that ally gets a bonus to an Ability associated with that spirit. Most totems have several related Abilities, although a totem-bound shaman receives a bonus to only one of them. This bonus isn't an "official" Trait, but a handful of additional dice that get added to the character's dice pool. If, say, Jinx gets "adopted" by the Seattle totem (in game terms, getting the Totem Background; see *Mage: The Ascension 20th Anniversary Edition*, Chapter Six), she'd receive a few dice added to the dice pools involved with her Technology Trait, although the Trait itself would not go up.

Bans: Totem allies have certain things they should, or should not, do. Also called *taboos*, these bans reflect the deal a shaman strikes with the totem spirit in exchange for its favor. If that person breaks the ban, the totem may withdraw its favor... and, in game terms, the Background Trait. If that person wants to keep the spirit happy, he ought to make some sort of apology and atonement with the spirit; until he does, that character loses dots in the Totem Background, and might even lose it for good if the ban was broken badly enough.

Soot (Synder's Familiar)

A mystical talking crow, Soot became the constant companion of Synder roughly three years ago. During her brief experience with the Chakravanti Tradition, he flew up to her, perched nearby, and introduced himself as "your friendly guide to places you'd rather not ever know about." Since then, Soot has remained a loyal (if often obnoxious) friend to the young mage, scouting out new locations for the Bridge Troll squats, keeping an eye out for the cops and rival gangs, and generally making himself more or less useful despite his habit of snatching the best food of the day out of some poor Troll's hands.

Game-wise, Soot is a two-dot Familiar Background, consuming two points of Quintessence per week, in the form of choice morsels of hard-to-come-by food. Synder grooms him constantly, too, which reinforces the bond they share. When necessary, he can "eat" one point of Synder's Paradox every other week; this he does by having Synder cut herself and then bleed onto a piece of food, which Soot inevitably eats, much to the disgust of the other Trolls.

For Soot's game-Traits, see the *Crow Gaffling* entry, below.

Craveling (Bane Spirit)

Human beings are rarely satisfied. Food, sex, money, drugs, power, companionship... the list of cravings goes on and on and on. And so, especially in cities, concentrated desire manifests as *cravelings*: spiritual embodiments of boundless need.

Like many spirits, a craveling has no set form. Drifting like smoke between "hosts," the spirit assumes the shape of a desired object or person – a crush, a wad of bills, a baggie of cocaine... whatever the person wants, the spirit becomes. Like craving itself, however, that vision remains immaterial; the person cannot grasp the spirit because that spirit has no physical form. The "host" sees the object of his desire, and wants it but cannot touch it. And so, he longs for it. That longing translates into emotional energy, and the spirit feeds...

To banish a craveling, the host must either assert his will to conquer his desire, or else fulfill that desire in some materially obtainable way:

- **Asserting Will:** In the first case, the player makes a successful Willpower roll to lock out the craving – and also, by extension, the craveling too. The player must roll the character's Willpower; the Storyteller makes a Willpower roll for the craveling, and both of them must beat difficulty 6. If the player scores more successes than the Storyteller does, then the spirit gets banished for good. If the Storyteller wins, then the character loses one point of temporary Willpower. That point goes to the spirit, temporarily raising its Willpower by one point. The character has to go indulge himself somehow, and then continue dealing with the spirit afterward.

- **Giving In:** If the character decides to give in to desire, the spirit remains satiated for a day or so. After that, of course, it comes back. This time, the player *voluntarily* gives a point of temporary Willpower to the spirit, and the cycle begins again...

Each "feeding" grants the craveling certain amount of Essence. Simple cravings (a date, a beer, or a piece of clothing) give it one point; risky, dangerous or socially questionable cravings (an affair, some cocaine, an expensive luxury) give it five points; and potentially ruinous indulgences (sexual obsession, crack, running credit cards to the limit) give it 10. Guess which indulgences the craveling will want folks to indulge?

As most addicts know, it usually takes a complete crash to banish such cravings. It's important to understand, however, that *those cravings do not originate from a craveling spirit*. These spirits are drawn to intense desire, and so that desire must exist before the spirit ever manifests to feed off of, and intensify, cravings that were already there.

Abilities: Willpower 5, Rage 5, Gnosis 3, Essence 15

Charms: Appear, Flee, Influence, Insight, Peek, Shapeshift, Soul-Reading, Stimulate Craving

Pattern Spider (Technology Minions)

Spirits of order and static reality, pattern spiders embody the forces of technology in the spirit world. The least-powerful of them appear as steel-and-crystal spiders an inch or two across; the largest approach, or even surpass, the size and mass of a small car. Most pattern spiders appear to incorporate pieces of various technological devices in their bodies and limbs: steam vents, vacuum tubes, pneumatic cylinders, integrated circuits, and so on. Most of these beings dwell in the Penumbra, always close to centers of advanced technology, indoctrination, and other centers of material and spiritual stasis.

Although they reflect the growing influence of technology in the material world, these cybernetic spiders cannot materialize in the mortal world; instead, they work to make certain that reality remains as static as possible in the regions where they're most

common. Media centers, classrooms, factories, construction sites, military installations and Technocracy Constructs host hundreds, often thousands, of these entities per site. Seattle is filled with such critters, especially in the downtown area and the tech-producing suburbs. And yet despite their apparently symbiotic relationship, very few Technocratic mages realize that these things even exist... much less regard them as allies. To the handful of Technocrats who've seen pattern spiders first-hand, the spiders look like one more weird-ass alien life-form, to be attacked and purged whenever possible.

As for the spiders themselves, they seem oblivious to the concept of individuality or independent thought. When they bother to communicate at all, these near-mindless beings refer to "us," not "I," address humans in collective terms, and regard their existence as a simple task, not a complicated journey. The idea that one might exist apart from the whole, much less pursue an individual existence, remains beyond their grasp.

Even so, certain mages have managed to strike deals with pattern spiders – usually by assigning them a project, leading them to an Umbral location in need of "repair," or otherwise giving these industrious spirits something to do. Virtual Adepts sometimes bond with the "data creepers" that swarm around their workstations, while Etherite Scientists study the "fascinating manifestations of arachnid energy-pattern loci" in the "counter-dimensional pockets" within their labs. Shamans who deal with werewolves refer to these creatures as "servants of the Weaver," regarding them as symptoms of a stagnant world. Yet for those mages who understand the greater benefits of technology, pattern spiders can be potent allies.

Weaving webs of solidified reality, pattern spiders spin "pattern webs" around flaws, ruins or "disruptive parties" who threaten the integrity of localized reality. In game terms, they use the Calcify Charm to capture intruders, and the Solidify Reality Charm to stabilize the surroundings on a metaphysical level. Certain pattern spiders have other Charms as well, reflecting a control over electrical, mechanical, and data-storage systems. (For details about such Charms, see **Mage: The Ascension 20th Anniversary Edition**, Chapter Nine.) In story terms, these beings spin their webs with tireless precision, with tiny data creepers ferrying information through electric networks or weaving it into "knots" of stored data. Although they don't appear in material reality, their work reinforces things like the Gauntlet or the "feel" and "stability" of a given place. A handful of the older entities can "vibrate" their webs in such a way as to cause pain to folks in materialized reality... an effect that goes a long way toward explaining the headaches and bodily discomfort people get when they spend too much time around certain types of technology.

Willpower 6, Rage 4-7, Gnosis 6, Essence 25-50

Charms: Calcify, Solidify Reality; some powerful spiders also have the Control Electrical Systems, Short Out, Lightning Bolt (five dice) and Web Flux Charms.

Raven & Crow

The supreme Trickster, Raven is said to have either made or saved the world on numerous occasions. His little cousin Crow is slightly more humble but no less clever. Smart, pragmatic, and unsettlingly knowledgeable, Raven and Crow have sinister connotations with some people and cultures for their habit of snacking on the dead. As a result, Raven and Crow are considered psychopomps, ferrying the spirits of the dead on to their rightful resting places... and occasionally bringing them back for revenge.

In Seattle, crows and – less frequently – ravens play a major part in the region's ecosystem. What pigeons are to most cities, crows are to Seattle. Crows, however, are smarter and more personable than pigeons... and tend to leave less of a mess where they perch, as well. Though certainly louder than pigeons (and their common rivals in Seattle airspace, seagulls), crows typify the image of 21st-century Seattle: smart, cocky, somewhat mystical, and full of eccentric attitude.

Manifestations: Flocks of crows or ravens, exceptionally large and/or vocal individual crows or ravens.

Associations: Intellect, knowledge, death, prophecy and foresight, mortality, tricks.

Brood: Corvid spirits; white ravens; mysterious people with long black hair; mischievous and often ominous folks in black – often with a snide or eerie sense of humor.

Abilities: Enigmas, Medicine, Subterfuge.

Bans: Raven-people aren't expected to place much stock in earthly goods, properties or concerns. Wealth is to be avoided unless it involves knowledge, secrets, or shiny things.

Crow Gaffling (Animal Spirit)

A minor manifestation of Crow or Raven, this animal-spirit appears to be a corvid of unusual size and perceptiveness. It can speak if it chooses to do so, and possesses uncanny insight and intellect. The first set of Traits reflect the Gaffling in its material form, while the second set represents the crow's, or raven's, innate spirit-powers.

Material Form

Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 3, Stamina 2, Perception 5, Intelligence 4, Wits 4

Abilities: Alertness 3, Athletics 2, Awareness 5, Brawl 2, Intimidation 2, Brawl 3

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0 (two soak dice, total)

Attack: Claw for two dice; bite for one die (only in desperation).

Spirit Form

Willpower 6, Rage 5, Gnosis 8, Power 25

Charms: Appear, Airt Sense, Influence, Materialize, Reform; some crow-spirits also have Possession and Spirit Away.

Powers: Foresight and prophecy (like a Time 3 Effect).

Glitch

A totem of the computer age, Glitch embodies the many frustrating strokes of misfortune that *shouldn't* happen and yet happen all the time. Glitch fouls communication, mangles data, crashes systems, and otherwise renders mechanical and electrical goods into infuriating blocks of pure malfunction. Often appearing as a coruscating blot of electrical malice, Glitch seems to enjoy showing off the limits of human vanity. Technoshamans both revere and dread this totem; although they can direct Glitch's attention into enemy gear, its capricious favors have a nasty habit of taking out technology of all kinds... particularly when you least expect it.

Glitch seems especially fond of Chopper's creations. Although she doesn't realize it yet, Chopper's on a first-name basis with Glitch's many manifestations. Glitch, however, doesn't really play favorites. In the land of Microsoft, Boeing, and other big-tech companies, there's always some mischief for Glitch to perform...

Manifestations: Electrical surges, crackling balls of energy, error messages (often displaying a snide sense of humor), the Dreaded Blue Screen of Death.

Associations: Malfunction, humbleness, ruin, chaos amidst order, the error of relying too heavily on mortal technology.

Brood: Computer-spirits of all kinds, viruses, gremlin-imps, pattern spiders with crackling auras and eerie deformities in their usually sleek forms.

Abilities: IT Hacking, Hypertech, Technology.

Bans: Don't get too proud – seriously, don't.

Seattle (City-Heart Totem)

Cities produce complicated spirits, and Seattle is no exception. Once a crowded, thriving region enjoyed by several Native American communities, it wound up precariously but vigorously "settled" by loggers and shipping interests. Literally founded upon the ruins of its trees – sawdust produced part of the city's original foundation – Seattle prospered through tree-cutting, prostitution, and its value as a West Coast port. Restless in both its material and spiritual nature, however, it has become the embodiment of a 21st-century American city: eccentric, technological, creative, wealthy, and riddled with secrets that "good folks" would rather ignore. Thus, the Spirit of Seattle is a complicated totem – generous one moment, with unpredictable undercurrents of coldness and cruelty.

Manifestations: Like any city-spirit, Seattle manifests in many different shapes, most of which are based on the people most readily identified (for better and worse) with that city. In Seattle's case, those personifications include crows, gulls and ravens, computer geeks, baristas, librarians, homeless people, tattooed millionaires, alterna-culture advocates, and grungy rock, jazz or hip-hop musicians. Material manifestations include laptops, telepathic trees, apparently intelligent cars, cups of coffee that whisper in voices only their drinker can hear, and – of course – bodiless voices in the apparently endless rain.

Associations: Restlessness, creativity, intellect, fertility, enigmas, nature, progress, addiction.

Brood: See above, as well as the other spirits in this section.

Abilities: Area Knowledge, Art, Computers, Streetwise.

Bans: A person devoted to Seattle should not leave that city if she can possibly help it. City-bound shamans tend to make "offerings" of material goods, money, service or a combination of them, all intended to make the city a better place to live. Truly wealthy devotees erect monuments, parks, urban projects or even buildings, while others lobby fellow citizens to construct or restore landmarks that distinguish the place.

Blue Wave (Drug-Spirit Totem)

Heroin and Seattle go together like needles and veins. And so it's no surprise that an embodiment of the essential spirit of Heroin has a soft spot for the Emerald City. Blue takes his name from the bluish cast of his skin – the color of a corpse whose blood has begun to settle. His touch confers a "wave" of ecstatic bliss, but tends to be fatal (or at the very least addictive) for everyone who decides to take his hand.

Blue's rather appealing, actually, with the slender glamour of a disaffected fashion-plate. His rakish black hair falls across his eyes with *just* the right amount of calculated affectation, and his clothes cling with tailored perfection. When he speaks, Blue weaves a charming blend of friendship and decadence. He's your refuge on bad nights, your companion when you've had enough of everybody's crap, the crying shoulder you need when life is just too damned hard to deal with on your own. Stylish, sympathetic, and always close by when you need him, Blue Wave never really goes out of style. Folks hang out him even when they know damned well that's probably a one-way relationship. After all, he's had lots of cool friends, so he can't possibly be all *that* bad, right...?

(Manifestations of Blue Wave possess an intoxicating touch. A character who chooses to reach out to Blue feels a staggering surge of wordless pleasure. The player of such a character needs to make a Stamina roll, difficulty 9, to withstand the effects of this spirit's bliss. Success allows the character to ride the wave without gaining an addiction; failure results in an insane craving for more intoxication; and a botch drops that character into an immediate and probably fatal overdose... but at least she goes out smiling.)

Manifestations: Generally an attractive young man with nearly irresistible charm... or occasionally as a beautiful woman with the same qualities. Blue's been known to appear as a raven or white serpent too, but the human guise appears to be Blue's favorite form.

Associations: Glamour, bliss, comfort and escape.

Brood: Cravelings; spirit-people who appear to be rock stars (and would-be rock stars), poets and artists, homeless kids; ravens and black or white cats; and glamorous "ghosts" who may or may not actually be dead.

Abilities: Carousing, Pharmacopeia, Streetwise.

Bans: Blue isn't fond of excitable mortals, and seems to sincerely want his chosen people to be happy... or at least numb... rather than suffering.

Neutral Parties

Most people in the Trolls' little world fall into an indeterminate range which runs between passive indifference, potential friendliness, and probable hostility. In your own Mage chronicle, the following "neutral parties" could represent friends, allies, strangers, threats, or people whose role has not yet been determined by circumstances.

The following entries reflect general templates for faceless groups. When such characters appear, your Storyteller should flesh them out with individual names, descriptions and motivations, and then add extra Traits that suit the character in question. One cop, for example, might get along well with Sabra's dogs (a few dots in the Empathy Talent, for example), or know just enough about technology to realize that Chopper's mad devices shouldn't be able to work... and yet, they still do. By personalizing these "neutral" characters, you'll give them vibrant roles in a world that all too often seems faceless and cold.

Joe and Jane Citizen

It's funny: Once you've dropped out of mainstream society, the "citizens" walking past you on the streets feel like exotic wildlife. Maybe they're drones, lost in vapid conversations and work-related worries. Or happy families reveling in things you can never have. They might mean well, tossing the occasional buck or coin your way. Most often, though, they're like wallpaper – sometimes ugly, often pretty, and typically meaningless in the greater drama of your life.

To a mage, these people are the Sleeping Masses, ignorant of the secrets all around them and generally too caught up in their own affairs to ever want to know what's really going on. That doesn't make them *bad* necessarily, although to Awakened eyes they can seem hopelessly stupid. For better and worse, such people are the face of the Consensus, determining what is and is not "real" simply through their beliefs. Some mages strive to protect them, others seek to elevate them, and still others want to destroy them on general principle.

From the perspective of mages like the Bridge Troll Cabal, "Joe and Jane Citizen" provide money for the tribe, especially when Jinx or Synder turn on the charm. All the same, it's not a good idea to let such people get too close unless a given individual has something else to offer. All five Bridge Trolls have friends among the Masses – cops, librarians, priests, artists, do-gooders, taxi-drivers, shop employees, and members of Seattle's thriving (if often unAwakened) neopagan community. From a game perspective, we encourage players and Storytellers to make up names, identities, and relationships for those characters. Although they're not slinging around magickal powers, these "Sleepers" can be among the most important supporting characters in your chronicle.

The average citizen in a non-combat zone has some useful abilities but no fighting skills to speak of. Though scrappy individuals (bullies, hookers, folks with a few self-defense classes under their belts) might have a dot or two in Brawl – perhaps even Firearms or a Martial Art – the "typical mortal" (as if such a thing exists!) has a professional skill or two, a hobby, and the

basic skills necessary to operate household and professional technologies (cars, cellphones, computers, etc.). If that person's an athlete, yoga enthusiast, personal trainer or so forth, she might have higher Physical Traits than usual. Receptionists, lab assistants, students, informants, reporters, artists, and so forth might be very good at their jobs (Mental Attributes and a professional skill of 3 or higher), but still tend to make themselves scarce if punches, bullets or lightning bolts start flying.

Image: This person could be anyone.

Suggested Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 1-3, Manipulation 1-3, Appearance 1-4, Perception 1-3, Intelligence 1-4, Wits 2

Suggested Abilities: Area Knowledge 1-3, Athletics 0-2, Crafts 0-3, Computer 1-3, Drive 1-2, Firearms 3, Technology 1-3 (plus Talents, Skills or Knowledges appropriate to their field or hobby, 1-3)

Willpower: 3

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1 -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Equipment: Wallet, cellphone, typical clothing and gear for the appropriate setting.

Roleplaying Notes: Depending on your motivations, your behavior runs the range of human experience.

Cops

Despite their obvious antagonism toward homeless folks, cops aren't necessarily The Enemy for people like the Bridge Trolls. Sure, they'll roust someone who's sleeping in "the wrong place," or bust you for pissing in an ally, or hassle you for... well, just for existing, to be honest. To most cops, homeless people are眼ores and nuisances at best, and potentially dangerous criminals more often than not. The "reality" of this perception is meaningless. Cops have the badges, guns, tear gas and numbers, and so the homeless tend to steer clear of the pigs.

And yet, a cop can also be an ally when you need one, driving away parasites who try to rob you, scraping you off the pavement before you freeze to death, or carting you off to a warm cell on nights when the wind off Puget Sound is enough to chill a corpse (or turn you into one). And so, although the Bridge Trolls and other folks have a hard time viewing the cops as "friends," a smart street person can score aid from a sympathetic cop if you know who to approach and how to ask nicely when you need help.

Suggested Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 2, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 3

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 2, Area Knowledge 3, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Computer 1, Drive 2, Firearms 3, Intimidation 1, Investigation 2, Law 2, Melee 2, Stealth 1, Streetwise 2, Technology 2

Willpower: 5

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1 -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Equipment: Badge and ID card, heavy pistol, night stick, pepper spray, taser, radio, police uniform.

Image: Typical beat cops wear the local law-enforcement uniform, carry the essential gear, and share the infamous wary “cop stare” that notes small details and brooks no argument. Plainclothes cops blend into the scenery (sort of...), while detectives favor large jackets and official-looking (though practical) clothing that conveys authority without actually shouting about it.

Roleplaying Notes: You’ve seen more awful things than you’re willing to discuss with anyone outside the Thin Blue Line. Except under the most extreme circumstances, you’re loyal to your fellow cops; you might not care for certain individuals, but only other officers can understand the things you go through.

Thugs

Some folks love to fight. Maybe they’re drunken frat guys, obnoxious barflies, gang members, furious protesters, boys, men or even women who’ve got more issues than sense. It’s pretty easy to end up on the bad side of such people, especially in the World of Darkness. Although they don’t put up much resistance against a stronger foe, thugs can give a mage or two a decently hard time unless that person’s got some mad skills on display.

For people like the Bridge Trolls, fist-swinging thugs are a two-way street. Such assholes can be your worst enemies when you’re looking for a quiet spot, or start trouble when you’d rather be left alone. If you know how to get on a thug’s good side, though, they can back you up at a bad time, or take out people you’d rather not have to fight yourself. And so, like cops, thugs can be allies as well as antagonists – and one who’s on your side one night might be backing you into a corner on the next, so never rely too heavily upon a thug.

Image: A rough and cocky attitude, perhaps accentuated by a few scars or old injuries, betrays this person’s willingness to fight.

Suggested Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 2, Manipulation 2, Appearance 2, Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 2, Area Knowledge 1, Athletics 2, Brawl 2, Crafts 2, Drive 1, Intimidation 1, Melee 2, Streetwise 1, Technology 1

Willpower: 3

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1 -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Equipment: Wallet and stuff, improvised weapons (pool cues, broken bottles, tire irons, chairs, protest signs, etc.).

Roleplaying Notes: Fighting is a rush. You enjoy it, and you’re pretty decent at it, if you must say so yourself!

Street Kids

The streets are crawling with abandoned kids: castoffs, runaways, slummers, addicts, impulsive runners without a long-term plan, and lost children with nowhere else to go. Most of these kids range from 13 to 18 years old, although it’s sadly not unusual to see a throwaway or refugee on the edge of puberty, or even younger than that. Thanks to their obvious youth

and lack of life-experience, these kids often get scooped up by predators and parasites. The lucky ones find “street families” that treat them more or less well. The unfortunates... well, let’s not think too deeply about what happens to them.

Right or wrong, most street kids don’t believe they can return to their families of origin. For them, the streets *are* home now, and that might be an improvement over the places they came from. Gangs, on the street, are a way of life. There’s safety in numbers even when the “family” treats a kid badly. Panhandling, pleading, stealing, squatting, trading sex and other favors – that’s all just part of the gig. Actual violence is rarer than you might expect, so long as family members follow the rules and stick with their pack. A kid on his or her own, though... well, even by street standards, that’s not a pleasant place to be.

Suggested Attributes: Strength 1, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 2, Manipulation 3, Appearance 1, Perception 2, Intelligence 1, Wits 2

Suggested Abilities: Academics 1, Alertness 2, Area Knowledge 1, Brawl 1, Intimidation 2, Melee 1, Stealth 2, Streetwise 2, Survival 1, Technology 1

Willpower: 2

Health Levels: OK, -1, -1 -2, -2, -5, Incapacitated

Equipment: Whatever can be easily carried and concealed, improvised weapons (broken bottles, knives, chains, and so forth).

Image: Street kids tend to be even more flamboyant than “typical” kids of their age. Survival, after all, often depends on being cute or intimidating enough to make an impression.

Roleplaying Notes: Make the best of whatever it takes to stay alive. Learn the talk, walk the walk, and never let on how scared you really are. Fear is weakness, and folks who show weakness are lucky if they die before the worst things happen.

Hardcore Homeless

Some folks don’t fit in anywhere except between the cracks of society. Addicted, insane, broken, or just too damned stubborn to play nice within a false-faced world, these people live on whatever they can beg, borrow, scrounge up or steal. We’re not talking here about the poor folks who’ve lost their homes through a quirk of fate or finances, but about people who’ve given up on mainstream America and now exist in a precarious state of freedom.

For better and worse, these people are survivors. Kick at them, and they’ll kick back harder. By and large they’re not “criminals” in the usual sense of the word, if only because crime involves too much risk. When you can’t get patched up on your medical plan, after all, or hit the medicine cabinet for some bandages or antiseptic, there’s not much benefit in looking for trouble. Most of these folks get by on whatever they can find without sticking their necks out too far. Oh, but they see what’s going on around them – all too well. Because homeless folks are considered “un-people” by the average citizen, they tend to blend into surroundings that most folks prefer not to notice

and try not to care about. As a result, these people – and they are still people, after all – make helpful allies, nasty enemies, and willing (if unreliable) sources of information, redemption, or even friendship for folks who treat them with respect.

Suggested Attributes: Strength 2, Dexterity 2, Stamina 3, Charisma 1, Manipulation 3, Appearance 1, Perception 3, Intelligence 2, Wits 1

Suggested Abilities: Alertness 2, Area Knowledge 3, Brawl 2, Crafts 1, Intimidation 2, Melee 2, Stealth 2, Streetwise 3, Survival 3, Technology 1

Willpower: 4

Health Levels: OK, -1, -2, -3, -4, -5, Incapacitated

Equipment: Whatever personal possessions and improvised weapons they can easily keep within reach.

Image: Ragged but possessing a distinct sense of pride, if only for having survived through the awful things they've encountered along the way, a "hardcore homeless" sort of person could be a grizzled veteran, backpacking vagabond, aging street kid, mumbling addict, glaring bag-lady, or any other "un-person" that "polite society" strives not to recognize as human. Although such folks tend to intimidate the average citizen (especially in the World of Darkness, where a street-survivor must be truly badass to live for long!), they usually prefer to avoid trouble and be left to their own devices. For very good reasons, they don't often trust "society" to give a wet fart what happens to them, and so it's not worth the risk of trying to make trouble.

Roleplaying Notes: In an ugly, world, you've got to grab what you can for you and yours. Watch your back, protect your friends, and be no one's victim if you can possibly avoid it.

Antagonists

Antagonists oppose the protagonists; where a story's main characters are "pro," antagonists are "anti." Such characters might not be "evil" per se, but their activities run against the aims and needs of the main characters. And so, while neutral parties could be friends or enemies for the Bridge Troll Cabal, certain characters – by definition – oppose the dysfunctional "heroes" of a Bridge Troll story.

Ronald "Big Ron" Berrigan (Technocrat)

"Sociopath" is such an ugly word. Let's just say that "Big Ron" is a super-achiever with an eye for talent and a fondness for the good life. He spots likely prospects, recruits them to for a variety of Technocratic firms, makes sure that everyone owes him favors, and then collects on those favors in a style that keeps him as close to happy as he's capable of being. Money's fine and sex is momentarily entertaining. Power has its uses, of course, and only a moron would say otherwise. The real payoff in Big Ron's book, however, involves the thrill of discovery and the bigger thrill of pulling off impossible things and getting away clean.

And so, when he's not making money for one of his clients or performing favors (paid back with interest!) for his many "friends," Big Ron likes to cruise the streets looking for people to hurt. Nothing-people, folks who won't be believed if they speak up or missed if they disappear. Emotional anguish and psychological pain tend to be more satisfying than physical injury – but hey, whatever works is cool with Ron.

Big Ron was cruising that way when he first ran across Khan and noticed that the sullen vet was anything but "nothing." This, too, is part of Big Ron's game: finding down-and-outers with unusual gifts, and then parlaying their discovery into more power and prestige. Such people owe Big Ron, and he collects in all sorts of ways. Khan, that ungrateful bastard, refused to play ball. And so, Big Ron has plans for Khan... plans far uglier than words like "sociopath."

Nature: Trickster

Demeanor: Benefactor

Essence: Questing

Affiliation: Technocracy (Syndicate)

Attributes: Strength 3, Dexterity 2, Stamina 2, Charisma 4, Manipulation 4, Appearance 4, Perception 5, Intelligence 3, Wits 3

Abilities: Academics 3, Alertness 4, Athletics 2, Awareness 2, Brawl 4, Carousing 3, Computer 2, Culture Savvy 2, Etiquette 4, Finance 3, Firearms 3, Intimidation 3, Investigation 2, Law 3, Leadership 2, Martial Arts (Karate) 2, Melee 4, Politics 3, Research 2, Science (Psychology) 3, Seduction 3, Subterfuge 4, Technology 3

Backgrounds: Allies 4, Avatar 2, Backup 2, Contacts 3, Resources 5, Spies 3

Willpower: 8

Health Levels: OK, OK, OK, OK, OK, -1, -2, -3, -4, -5, Incapacitated

Armor Rating: 0 (five soak dice, total)

Arete: 6

Spheres: Correspondence 1, Entropy 2, Forces 3, Life 4, Mind 4, Prime 2, Time 1

Image: The hearty corporate moniker "Big Ron" is more descriptive of Ron's influence than his size. Physically, he's unremarkable – unusually attractive, true enough, and well-dressed even when he's slumming – except for his eyes. The predatory flatness of his gaze manages to silence Big Ron's many critics. Bright blue and uncannily clear, those eyes can raise hackles and stifle objections when Ron turns his full attention upon someone he dislikes.

Ron Berrigan spends plenty of time the gym, but it's more for show than for muscle. In the halls of power, he knows all the right things to say. His smile opens doors that remain closed to lesser men, and his clothes speak of large bank accounts and cultivated taste. Ron keeps his light brown hair snipped into stylish tangles that betray the intentional messiness of a high-priced pro. Handsome as a polished switchblade, Big Ron

Berrigan looks like a man who gets what he wants... because he usually does.

Roleplaying Tips: There's no need to act superior when you really *are* superior. Be friendly. Be gracious. Speak softly, handing out compliments when it's useful and threats when necessary. Don't monolog – that's ridiculous. A superior man does not justify his actions. Those actions speak for themselves.

Focus: Long before he was recruited into the Technocratic Syndicate, Big Ron understood that might is right. Power is the only fact, and so he's spent his life acquiring the tools of power: money, style, influence, connections, secrets, and the technologies of fashion, deceit, and periodic violence. That power, to him, is simply a means to an end; the real reward comes from making people jump at his command. Whether that involves threats, rewards, commands or seductions, Big Ron knows how to get things done.

Berrigan does not consider himself in any sense a "mage." Magick is *real*, he knows, but its key is excellence, not esoterica. In game terms, Big Ron employs the Spheres of Entropy, Mind, Life, Prime and Time – not in showy theatrics, but through subtle manipulations of people and resources. His primary practice involves social domination, with an emphasis on high finance and the Art of Desire. He has money, charming people skills, eloquent words and silent glances, high fashion, and – when someone needs to be slapped around – martial arts and the 9mm Glock Ron carries "for personal protection." After all, a man in his position can't afford to take chances. Backed up by subtle applications of his Spheres, Ron adds a bit of extra "push" to perfectly normal tools. Thus, almost everything he does is considered coincidental – certainly nothing as vulgar as so-called "magick!"

Avatar: In Technocratic terminology, an "avatar" is referred to as an *Eidolon* if it gets referred to at all. In Berrigan's case, that Eidolon is himself: a striding, confident, cool-as-winter-rain vision of Big Ron in all his glory. During the few moments of weakness he feels, this image of his "superior self" guides Berrigan toward an elegant solution, or else flays him with callous observations about his failures. As a result, he rarely fails. Scary as he might be to lesser beings, Big Ron remains a valuable asset to his associates, and so they tend to look the other way when he indulges himself. After all, every great man is entitled to a few vices now and then.

Associates: Berrigan often goes "hunting" on the streets with three to six thug-type "associates." These folks – usually, but not always, men – might be slumming rich folks out to score some nasty action. Every so often, though, Big Ron runs with some of his contacts in the local gang community. He doesn't do this very often, as it's not good to be seen with "the wrong people." Ron's a risk-taker, though, and so he'll occasionally head out with some gangbangers in tow.

On top of Ron's "personal touch," he can always call in favors among the cops and gangs, sending people after his targets even when he himself doesn't come along for the ride. A sure sign of power, after all, involves being able to hit people hard when they don't even know where the blow is coming from.

Story Hooks

Mage doesn't lend itself well to "modules." Linear adventures that lead from Scene One to Scene Two to Scene Three and eventually to a one-size-fits-all climax are alien to this game. Because **Mage**'s entire concept is based upon flexible, subjective reality, every group plays **Mage** a bit differently. And so, while the following story hooks can provide inspiration for your own gaming group's approach to the Bridge Troll Cabal, the stories your group will create with them are going to be as unique as each mage's personal view of Ascension, magick and reality.

- **Haywire:** Chopper swipes some experimental technology that had been accidentally (or perhaps purposefully) thrown away. Integrating it into her own designs, she manages to get it to function in some unexpected and perhaps dangerous way. The result could be an erratic supercomputer, a robot with distinctly unpleasant programming (as in the movie *Hardware*), a transdimensional gateway, or some other piece of tech that complicates life for the Bridge Troll Cabal. That situation could become even more complex if Chopper likes her new toy(s) and has no intention of shutting down her creations even if they endanger the group as a whole.
- **New Kid on the Block:** Soot spots a fresh runaway whose talents capture his attentions. He encourages Synder to go bring the kid in, but the new prodigy (who may or may not be an Awakening mage) has other ideas. Maybe that kid wants to go at things alone, or has some serious trauma from the home they left behind. The new kid might be running from someone really bad – Big Ron, Blue Wave, or some other nasty nemesis. Maybe the kid's a budding Marauder, with metaphysical psychosis and powers far beyond the kid's control. The prodigy might be bait for a bigger trap. Or maybe the new kid is a sociopath who's manipulative enough to turn members of the Cabal against one another without them even realizing the true source of that conflict...
- **Busted:** Jinx and Sabra are both clearly underage. This fact may become a liability for Khan and his crew, who could be arrested and charged with various crimes ("contributing to the delinquency of a minor," for starters) if a cop decided to press the issue. Police might provide problems for any number of reasons: a raid on the squat; complaints from neighbors of those squats or from merchants near where the group has been performing; a bust of one of those illegal fire-spinning parties; information (accurate or otherwise) given to the cops about "crimes" that the group has been committing; a young "stray" who's got cops on her tail, and so forth. Perhaps Big Ron has tipped off some Seattle Police Department contacts, and sent in orders to have the Trolls rounded up; or maybe the trolls really have done something that the cops can't ignore, and now there's

an effort being made to arrest them all. Either way, the presence of Jinx and Sabra will make things go much harder for the Bridge Troll crew if the cops crack down on them. And for obvious reasons, the Trolls can't just let loose on the police. Even for mages, that's a one-way ticket to prison or the morgue. How, then, will they deal with police attention, especially if the cops have a driving reason to bring them down?

- **The Big Gig:** The Trolls have a big fire-show lined up in a warehouse hosting an illegal rave. Who's gonna be there? Big Ron? The Totem of Seattle in some unobtrusive form? Maybe the cops have heard about the rave, and are planning to shut it down. Or maybe there's some other mage faction using that big party as an opportunity to recruit people (or take them out), lure Synder back into the fold, or undermine the underground scene. Maybe everything just works out *well* for a change, with the Trolls picking up some goodies and contacts along the way. Or perhaps some otherworldly entity arrives to take advantage of the altered reality of a rave and the delicious pleasures to be had in such a place and time...

- **The Brightest Light in the Room:** Chopper's genius is obvious to anyone who sees her work in action. Perhaps she's sick of living on the streets, and decides to join a larger group: the Society of Ether, Iteration X, the Virtual Adepts, or some other (perhaps even Nephantic) group of mages. She might have even belonged to the lower ranks of the Technocracy – possibly the Syndicate front that Khan worked for as well. Whichever group has noticed her, that group may decide to take her whether she wants to join them or not... or to offer her something that she either can't or won't refuse. The Trolls would lose a great deal if Chopper were to leave. What might they do to stop her... or keep her even if she *wanted* to go?

- **We've Come to Take You Home:** Synder used to belong to both the Cult of Ecstasy and – briefly – the Euthanatos Tradition. She left because she didn't like the way things went down within those groups. What if they want her back, though? Perhaps she wants to return as well, but doesn't wish to leave Khan and the other Trolls in the lurch. Both Traditions have sinister reputations, so imagine what might happen if the darkest rumors about those groups turned out to be true. Maybe Synder ran away for very good reasons, and someone in one or both groups plans to shut her up once and for all...

- **Back to Work, Son:** Khan also left a larger organization in an effort to escape its leadership. Maybe the Syndicate intends to bring him back, one way or another. Perhaps

a friend or mentor within that organization has figured out how corrupt Big Ron is, and needs Khan to help expose his former boss. Maybe they're just *saying* they want to bring Ron down, and plot to grab Khan back once he shows signs of cooperating. Or maybe, just maybe, Khan gets sick of scrounging for everything, and decides that he wants to return to the cushy office job and financial security of the Syndicate. What if Synder doesn't want him to go? And what if, perhaps, she *does*...?

- **Rival Turf:** Street families exist in constant states of flux, marked by sporadic violence and internal conflict. Maybe some other member of the Trolls – Synder, Jinx or Chopper, perhaps – decides to replace Khan as the leader of their group. Maybe Khan *should* be replaced, but no one knows what to do about it. It could be that there's a rival "family" or street gang that wants to unseat the Trolls, recruit or remove certain members of that group, or take over one or more of the family squats. Sure, the Trolls aren't pushovers, but if some "big player" with money, numbers, magick or other powers behind him decides to take over, the resulting gang-war would be dangerous for everyone involved.

- **The End of Silence:** Sabra shut down for reasons he won't talk about. What if he *does* start talking, though? And what if what he has to say compels the Trolls to take action against the folks who hurt their brother/sister in that lost past life? It could be that one or more of Sabra's old "clients" wants him back... or that his old addictions get the best of him. Perhaps Sabra returns to the flock of Blue Wave or some other spirit of addiction, like the cravelings or some worse entity. Maybe he's decided to assume a female identity again... or has begun to perfect enough magick to become male physically as well as mentally. What effect might such changes have upon the dogs, or on other animals that Sabra has befriended? Maybe Sabra has decided to get revenge, and is using his Arts as well as his animals to secure that revenge for him...

- **The Frayed Edge of Sanity:** Every Bridge Troll has some serious damage inside: drugs, exploitation, violation, abuse... that sort of thing drives people to all sorts of extremes, and mages – despite their Awakening – are not immune. Maybe cravelings latch on to the inner needs of one or more members of the Cabal. Blue Wave is a damned seductive spirit, and his (or her) appeal holds a lot of power on the streets. Glitch could bedevil Chopper and her machines. Seattle might want another luminary sacrifice. All mages exist on "the frayed edge of sanity," and where one might fall, others may join the plunge...

Whatever happens, wherever events might take the Bridge Troll Cabal, one thing's obvious: No matter who you are or where you might be, Awakening is never as simple as it may seem.



Name:
Player:
Chronicle:

Nature:
Demeanor:
Essence:

Affiliation:
Sect:
Concept:

Attributes

Physical

Strength _____ ●OOOO
 Dexterity _____ ●OOOO
 Stamina _____ ●OOOO

Social

Charisma _____ ●OOOO
 Manipulation _____ ●OOOO
 Appearance _____ ●OOOO

Mental

Perception _____ ●OOOO
 Intelligence _____ ●OOOO
 Wits _____ ●OOOO

Abilities

Talents

Alertness _____ OOOOO
 Art _____ OOOOO
 Athletics _____ OOOOO
 Awareness _____ OOOOO
 Brawl _____ OOOOO
 Empathy _____ OOOOO
 Expression _____ OOOOO
 Intimidation _____ OOOOO
 Leadership _____ OOOOO
 Streetwise _____ OOOOO
 Subterfuge _____ OOOOO

Skills

Crafts _____ OOOOO
 Drive _____ OOOOO
 Etiquette _____ OOOOO
 Firearms _____ OOOOO
 Martial Arts _____ OOOOO
 Meditation _____ OOOOO
 Melee _____ OOOOO
 Research _____ OOOOO
 Stealth _____ OOOOO
 Survival _____ OOOOO
 Technology _____ OOOOO

Knowledges

Academics _____ OOOOO
 Computer _____ OOOOO
 Cosmology _____ OOOOO
 Enigmas _____ OOOOO
 Esoterica _____ OOOOO
 Investigation _____ OOOOO
 Law _____ OOOOO
 Medicine _____ OOOOO
 Occult _____ OOOOO
 Politics _____ OOOOO
 Science _____ OOOOO

Spheres

Correspondence _____ OOOOO
 Entropy _____ OOOOO
 Forces _____ OOOOO

Life _____ OOOOO
 Matter _____ OOOOO
 Mind _____ OOOOO

Prime _____ OOOOO
 Spirit _____ OOOOO
 Time _____ OOOOO

Advantages

Backgrounds

_____ OOOOO
 _____ OOOOO
 _____ OOOOO
 _____ OOOOO
 _____ OOOOO
 _____ OOOOO

Arete

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Health

Bruised	-0	<input type="checkbox"/>
Hurt	-1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Injured	-1	<input type="checkbox"/>
Wounded	-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Mauled	-2	<input type="checkbox"/>
Crippled	-5	<input type="checkbox"/>
Incapacitated		<input type="checkbox"/>

Other Traits

_____ OOOOO
 _____ OOOOO
 _____ OOOOO
 _____ OOOOO
 _____ OOOOO
 _____ OOOOO

Quintessence



Paradox

Experience

--



I tell you this: We are Divinity.

Reality is ours to bend. To subvert. To command.
We have that power - all of us.

Not everyone knows what to do with it, or uses it well.
Most of us never realize just what it is we are or how much we can do.

Those of us who do... well, some of us are monsters.
Manipulators. Parasites. Tyrants.

Fanatics. And the rest of us never see that monster in our own mirror,
only in the reflections of those folks who are not "us."

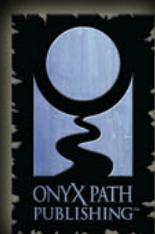
Here's the truth, though: We are ALL "us." We are ALL gifted.

We can ALL change the world. Most of us remain asleep.

A blessed few Awaken. Fewer still use that power wisely.
And none without consequences.

And so, reality is up for grabs. Where do you stand?

And will you Fall... or Ascend?



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THE ASCENSION